

Case Study: Staff Augmentation and Increased Engagement through Technology

Categories:

- ◆ Increased Staff Efficiencies
- ◆ Reduced Social Isolation
- ◆ Increased Resident Engagement and Satisfaction
- ◆ Increased Quality of Life
- ◆ Reduced Feelings of Loneliness

About the Organization

Organization Name: Westminster Canterbury Shenandoah Valley

Main Contributor: Donielle Palmer, Director of Resident Services

Organization Type: Assisted Living Facilities, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Memory Care Facility, Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC)

Organization Description:

In 1982, the family of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Lawrence, Jr., generously donated the land for Westminster Canterbury Shenandoah Valley in Winchester, VA. The first residents were welcomed in 1987. The organization is a nonprofit, church-related, continuing care retirement community that enables residents to use their gifts fully and live their lives richly. There are 60 residents in the assisted living community including memory support, and 51 residents in skilled nursing. The community has 2 part-time and 4 full-time staff members.

Project Description

When Donielle first began as the Director for Resident Services in July of 2015, resident engagement was focused on getting as many residents to available activities as possible instead of building person-centered programs. Donielle changed that model by focusing on true engagement instead, which meant making sure that each experience was personalized and that every resident received person-centered programs. This changed the whole strategy to resident engagement. As a former administrator, she knew she had to find ways to augment her staff so that every resident could find purpose through resident engagement. Today, engagement is not measured by the number of residents participating in an activity, but the number of residents who are meaningfully engaged regardless of the duration of that activity.

Socialization Modality

Video Chat, Email, Art, Games, Exercise, Music, Pet and Horticulture Therapy

System Embodiment

Tablet, Desktop Computer, Laptop, Smart TV, 2 Linked Senior Kiosks

Business Model

No cost to consumer – The Well Connected programs are funded by Covia with additional Medicare Advantage Program, Managed Care, Partnership with Hospitals on Hospital Readmission Reduction Program (HRRP) - part of our QAPI program, Private Insurance, Private Pay

Implementation Approach

The project started when Donielle and her team realized that they weren't set up for success. They didn't truly understand the preferences of their residents. Furthermore, they didn't know how to allocate resources, nor did they know in real time if they were engaging all their residents. The goal of the project was to provide 180 meaningful and person-centered activities per month and ensure that staff knew in real-time if all residents were being meaningfully engaged. The community chose this goal because staff were spending too much time researching and preparing programs. The staff were also not organized effectively to do group and one-on-one activities or manage volunteers.

Using the Linked Senior dashboard daily, team members were able to easily identify which residents were not being engaged meaningfully. The staff members also use the internet, Linked Senior, and other resources to find activities quickly.

One staff member is a part of a group on Facebook for activity directors, which has been a prolific source of programmatic ideas.

To better understand the current needs and preferences of the resident, the organization uses the Let Me Help You Get to Know Me form, as well as section F of the Minimum Data Set (MDS). When a new resident moves in, a biography is written about them that the staff can then reference when planning engagement activities. Another strategy enacted was to offer more than one activity option at any given time, so different events are happening on different floors to give residents a choice of what to participate in.

Outcomes

Using the Linked Senior dashboard for 10 months, the community has been able to increase meaningful engagement among residents, especially to those residents who may not have been receiving it before. Since the community looked at solutions, including Linked Senior, to reduce research and preparation time for activities, the team is now more organized. Every staff member has a focus, whether that is on level of care, group activities, or one-on-one activities. To help staff save time on documentation and real-time attendance tracking, the community invested in technology, including Linked Senior, that integrated easily with their existing EHR system.

This has resulted in a reduction in social isolation and feelings of loneliness, an increase of staff efficiencies, an increase of quality of life, and an increase in resident engagement and satisfaction. Within 6 months, the implemented engagement solutions produced three important results:

- ◆ **A 60% reduction in research and preparation time for engagement:** A time savings which was then allocated to building more programs for group and one-on-one engagement.
- ◆ **Increased staff efficiency and satisfaction:** Once the team was focused on specific goals, they became more effective and comfortable in performing their work.

- ◆ **100% visibility in real-time engagement:** The implementation of a real-time engagement solution allowed the team to monitor engagement as each month unfolded so that they could adapt to the needs of residents and increase the time available for staff to provide meaningful engagement.

One success example includes a resident in the community who rarely came out of her room, she sometimes only came out to take a bath. During a care plan meeting, her family praised the activity coordinators for coming into her room to do regular one-on-one activities to keep her engaged.

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

When Donielle first started in her role, there was a focus on the wrong numbers. The organization's culture was not focused on the quality of the engagement they were providing nor how meaningfully each person was engaged.

Lessons Learned/Advice to Share with Others

You have to ask yourself if every resident is engaged. Groups are important and fun, but many residents choose not to participate or cannot, so they need the opportunity to be provided with one-on-ones. The organization continues to stress the importance of being present, active listening, and intimate touch.

Using real-time tools is critical. Every Monday, Donielle reviews the Linked Senior dashboard and sends out a working list of residents that need to have one-on-ones. This list is sent to the activities team, volunteers, and social workers. True engagement is what matters most. Donielle strives to instill the idea that there is always five minutes in a staff member's day to sit with someone or listen to someone who may not receive that type of attention from task-oriented nursing staff. Staff augmentation works by selecting the correct tools and best practices to allow staff members to do what they love: help older adults find purpose everyday.