



VA Lessons from COVID: Community is the Antidote to Isolation

CONCERT Team
(Community Living Centers Ongoing National Center for Enhancing Resources & Training)
funded by VA's Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care

CONCERT team



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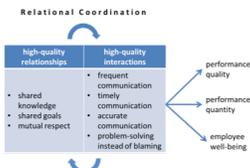
What CONCERT does...



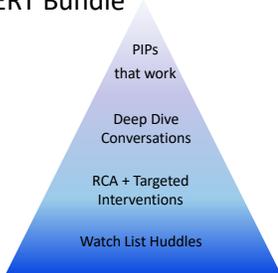
- Supports Community Living Centers (CLCs) in improving quality

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CONCERT's Foundation



The CONCERT Bundle

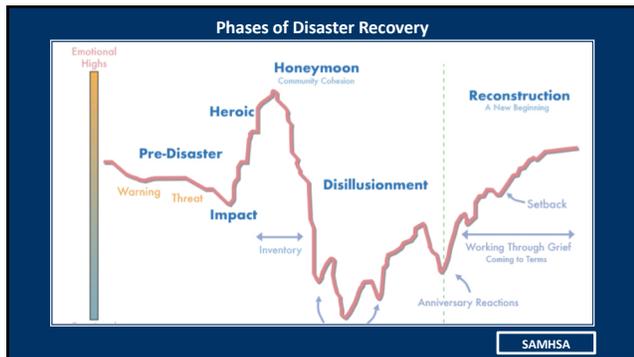


Setting the Stage



- 1-1 Coaching on request
- CONCERT Office Hours
- VISN-based collaborative meetings
- Consultations on staff and veteran distress





In it together

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- Community/Connection is the Antidote to COVID Isolation:
 - For staff
 - For residents

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Careful, not fearful

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- We're a mirror

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Problem solving together



- Share information
- Share ideas

Trust and safety

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Watch list huddles for high risk residents.

It's a Game Changer!



- Who are you worried about? Who keeps you up at night?
 - Fragile, complex
- Who are your staff worried about?
 - Emergent issues before they become full blown
- Fluid list, changes all the time
- From reactive to proactive
 - 24 hour report to WLH

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Who will be on your watch list?



- What are some conditions or treatments that require watching, teamwork, escalating care?
- Examples range from:
 - Falls
 - COVID positive, or suffering from isolation
 - Coumadin
 - During high pollen times, who has respiratory issues
 - Newly admitted residents
 - Anyone you're changing meds on

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The key is that it is interdisciplinary



- Combines the intimate day to day knowledge of caregiving staff with the clinical expertise of providers
- In most long term care settings there is not a systematic way to harvest information that those providing daily care have
- Breaks down silos-creates a true caregiving team

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The elements of a watch list huddle



Each resident on the list is discussed

- What concerns you about this resident's status/situation?
- Just in Time Teaching
- What should staff look out for, what should they do?
- Updates on test results, action items, how residents are doing
- Use a white board or flip chart to capture notes
- End with action items that will be discussed at next meeting

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Just in time teaching



- Short description of the disease or condition-under two minutes
- Review how to escalate care in response
- What to look for and why
- Ask staff what they are seeing

Staff really appreciate knowing what is going on, and by having these short informative talks you are creating a true caregiving partnership

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It's all in the details



- Keep it under 15 minutes- use your timer
- Hold it where you can talk freely
- Figure out with the team the best time
- **Start on time**
- Have other staff watch the bells
- Start with the CNA who is assigned
- Include ancillary staff
- End by asking if anyone else should be on list

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You are putting in place a whole house communication system



These huddles are more important than ever. In the COVID era you will need to have regular ways to stay on top of resident emergent issues.

Your staff will appreciate the opportunity to share what they know.

You can use your watch list huddles to keep staff abreast of the latest information on COVID, especially as it is ever changing as knowledge about the virus grows.

As you have these huddles regularly, they will take less time, because staff will be familiar with them and not every name will be new to the list.

You will all get better at it, the more you do it.

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Good Facilitation



- Good huddles depend on good facilitation
- In the beginning, the facilitator needs to be in a leadership position
- The long-term goal is to train frontline nurses to lead the huddles
- Leaders need to continue to regularly attend huddles to mentor facilitators, communicate huddle's importance, and monitor huddle quality

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Huddle Facilitation Tips and Skills



- The facilitator is the guardian of the process
- Start and end on time
- Redirect diversions (“let’s put that in the “parking lot” for later”)
- Use a go-around process to hear from everyone
- Ask probing and open-ended questions (“Tell me more...” or “you work with him everyday, what do you see?”)
- Appreciate relevant information and value diverse perspectives
- Create a small action plan with the information gathered

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Remote Facilitation



Maintaining watch list huddles while some team members are working remotely enables on-site and remote staff to continue to be “in it together.”

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Technical tips



- **Choose platform(s) that work for you** – Pilot different platforms (Phone Conference/Webex/Teams/Skype/Etc.)
- **Visuals/documentation** – Use a huddle board to capture information
- **Group Size** – small in-person groups to enable social distancing and mitigate risk
- **Backups** – Technology sometimes fails...have a backup

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Process tips



- **Notify everyone** – Hold huddles at a regular, specific time & send an invite
- **Start with a grounding moment** – Choose something meaningful to staff that supports well-being and strengthens community
- **Mute** – Remind people to place themselves on mute until ready to speak
- **Be aware of possible difficulties hearing** – Designate the person closest to the phone to repeat any comments

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Process tips



- **Visual Information** – Be aware that visual information cannot be seen by those on the phone.
- **Start with the frontline** – Start by first asking the frontline staff for timely information about how the Veteran is doing
- **Check in with everyone** – Call on people to chime in and create a welcoming, inclusive tone
- **Recap** – Always end a discussion with a recap of action steps and assignments

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Examples



Huddle in-person & by phone

All phone huddle

Huddle in-person & by video



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Supporting staff under COVID stress



COVID Stress:

- Pandemic affecting several aspects of our lives
- Requires an exhausting amount of resilience

How we all can help ease the pressure:

- Reinforce team bonds,
- Boost morale
- Practicing individual self-care.



Beneficial Practices to Address COVID Stress



Leadership Practices:

- Being available, actively listening, acknowledging feelings, expressing gratitude and appreciation
- Offer flexible scheduling, create opportunities for staff to connect, creating self-care spaces

Peer-to-Peer Practices:

- Opportunities for “on-the-spot” decompression, making time to celebrate each other, and reminding each other of the importance of self-care

Individual Practices:

- “Putting your own oxygen mask on first” – eating well, sleeping well, exercise
- Use “quiet rooms”, embrace the natural world, finding joy in everyday things



Supporting residents under COVID isolation: The antidote to isolation is community!



- Isolation and quarantine protocols are increasingly taking their toll on long-term care (LTC) residents
- LTC staff can lessen residents’ sense of isolation in individually meaningful ways that reinforce connectedness with others
- Meaningful engagement helps reduce functional, cognitive and emotional decline
- Feeling connected increases resilience!



Some of our favorite ideas for meaningful engagement and connection



- Communal projects -- virtual walks, collaborative murals
- Pet grooming for robotic pets
- "Gimme 10's" -- Challenge residents to do 10 virtual high-fives, 10 deep breaths, or 10 leg lifts to "Kick COVID out!"
- Support residents to make masks or to call others who may live alone
- Create community through get-to-know-you Zoom interviews between residents and facility staff/leadership
- Creative and useful resources from the Center for Applied Research in Dementia at <https://www.cen4ard.com/what/free-resources/>
- Great ideas from Pioneer Network at [ABC's of Combatting Isolation](#)

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Looking Forward



- Strong teams with strong foundations
 - Watchlist Huddles
 - Consistent Assignment
 - Protecting Sleep and Reducing Falls
 - Deep Dives



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Use lessons learned and best practices to prepare and plan for success!



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Any questions, comments, or additions?
Use question box





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