



# Changing the Way We Care: Innovation & Transformation Conference

June 14 and 15 2017, Toronto

## Learning Circle Discussion Recaps

*The points listed below have been transcribed from the Learning Circle Discussion notes. They have been transcribed in their entirety, with only small edits for clarity.*

Learning Circle Description: Learning circles are a mechanism for organizing and honouring the collective wisdom of the group and forming cumulative knowledge. The learning circles were divided into six topics relevant to Family Councils.

### Technology and Family Councils

**Description:** How to use technology effectively and efficiently to increase your impact

General uses of technology/internet:

- Find inspirational quotes/images to put up throughout the Home
- Find free images/templated to use for creating materials

Website/Social Media:

- Facebook group/page for Council/Cluster/Network
- Family Council website (e.g. <http://www.hillsdaleestatesfamilycouncil.com>) or a page on the Home's website
- Blog site
- Family Council email address e.g. Gmail, Rogers or Home domain address
- Skype or other tools for virtual meetings (stream or hold meetings)
- Collaboration and document storage tools like Google Drive (<https://www.google.ca/drive/>), DropBox ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)), Microsoft OneDrive (<https://onedrive.live.com>)

Tools and technologies available in LTC Homes:

- Smart boards or TVs in lobby, showing info on/announcements from FC

- Snozelen rooms, activity carts

#### Materials you can create more easily with technology

- Brochures
- Flyers
- Welcome/memorial cards
- Meeting signs
- Meeting notices
- Name tags
- Business cards

#### Information distribution:

- Email meeting notices, minutes, reminders
  - Expand your reach beyond those who come in person- keep all family members connected to the Council
- Regular eNewsletter of FC info/activities/updates
- Resource list of community organizations, with contact info e.g. local Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Societies
  - A great resource for families
- Develop and maintain contact list (database) for family members/FC members
  - Use to connect with members and others
- Printed material in Home's admission package

#### To support Council activities & goals:

- Use at educational events/meetings e.g. laptop & projector
- Technology discussions at meetings e.g. on new scams

#### Free tools:

- Canva ([www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)) for creating flyers, graphics, brochures etc...
  - Develop promotional materials that are eye-catching
- Mailchimp ([www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)) for eNewsletter
  - Create a regular Family Council eNewsletter to share info and updates
- SurveyMonkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) for creating free (up to 10 questions/survey) and anonymous surveys
  - Use for getting feedback on Council goals or activities; anonymously survey members on their opinions of how well the Council is functioning (feedback survey)

#### Making good visits:

- Bring the world into the Home e.g. have iPads, eReaders available to share photos, books, magazines with residents
- iPad, iPod lending programs
- Apps e.g. Promenade (<http://www.promenadeapp.com/>)

- Develop 'visiting idea' book that have ideas on how to use technology when visiting e.g. grandchildren/students can use their smartphones to pull up images of where a resident grew up or play music from their younger days

#### General tips:

- Use the right tool for the right job: technology isn't 'one size fits all'
- Find the right people with the right skills e.g. editing, design, translation
- Need good Internet access within the Home to be able to carry out some of this
- Develop a good communications plan; identify audiences and determine how best to reach them (mail, email, phone)

## Family Council Structure

**Description:** A key role of any Family Council is to ensure safe, high quality care in Long Term Care. Family Councils need some form of either formal or informal organization to ensure that they carry out their role.

#### Important considerations when deciding on a Council structure

- Formal structure vs. informal structure
  - Formal: executive; staff assistant
    - Chair, co-chair, secretary are the usual positions
    - Follow Robert's Rules
  - Informal: volunteers, share leadership; staff assistant
    - Example: Social worker calls the meeting and family members show up; small memberships concentrated on issues; structure fluid and in transition- trying to formalize; began as steering committee and a starting point from which to formalize Council over period of 1 year
- Elected positions vs. volunteer executive
- Structure can play a positive or negative role; choose carefully

#### Important points:

- Structure required for continuity, action orientation, completion of tasks, to keep FC members engaged
- Terms of Reference essential, helps with structure
- Structure may be formal on paper, but not in practice due to willingness to take on responsibilities
- Meetings focussed on education with small portion on business can work
- No "best way" to structure a FC -> what works best for your group is best for it
- Secretary typically is the most difficult role to fill
  - Example: volunteer took over the role and helped with creative ways to organize paperwork

### Key success factors

- Mentorship from other FC members
- Need to attract the right people: need a global view, not just personal issues
- Training for LTC Administrators on how to engage positively with FC
- Structure plays a big role in success
- Work with Home management teams
- Engage all members in Council
  - Example: because Council seen as so competent, may be intimidating to join or feel that there is no need to add to Council

### Relationship with management/Home

- No interference from management: communication/records recorded authentically from FC point of view
- Need to have forums/opportunities for discussion where no managers present
- Prioritize resolution between family and paid/professional caregivers
- Meeting refreshments provided by Home

### Document management

- Minutes:
  - Distribute only to those who attended (sent by staff assistant)
  - Corrections and changes submitted and approved at meeting
  - Approved minutes send by email to all on list
  - Post in binder in common area
- Notices:
  - On boards in each resident area
  - On board in common areas

## Supporting Families & Making the Most of Your Visit

**Description:** The goal of every Family Council is to support their loved ones within Long Term Care. Residents are the reason we organize.

### How to best support residents

- Listen to concerns
- Being their voice with management
- Social worker partnership to help advocate for those residents who are non-verbal and don't have family support
- Recognize importance of resident voices and experiences: this is what it's all about listen, empathize, smile, laugh
- Become friends with the residents, especially ones with no visitors
- Encourage family members to bring their loved ones to the FC meeting (where appropriate)

### Collaboration with residents/Residents' Council (RC)

- Engage Residents' Council: shared attendance at meetings for information exchange/support
- FC & RC executives can jointly work on projects e.g. review of admission package
- Support shared concerns; families can be advocates
- Chair of RC attends FC Meeting
- Ask if can attend RC Council to broaden partnership
- Shared events with RC
- Support RC fundraising events

### Support for residents

- Support for residents who don't have families/advocates
- Need to hear residents' voices to ensure choice, independence, participation
- New Resident Tea (quarterly event)- attend with family, FC chair, RC chair, Social Worker, Administrator
- Support residents, families, staff through membership in FC

### Partnerships

- Invite Home's Administrator/Executive Director to meetings to give update on what's current/new in Home
- Have meaningful engagement with PSWs

### Important points

- Don't use names of specific residents during meetings- respect privacy and dignity of residents
- Residents' voices and experiences matter because we can't fix what we don't know

## Projects

**Description:** Projects are an excellent way for Family Councils to come together and impact change, innovation and transformation within their Long Term Care Home. While projects vary in size, length and objectives they all exist to bring about a specific goal. What have you learned from the projects implemented by your Family Council. Think about the success and challenges undergone.

Key point: Experiencing a well-oiled project & having a positive experience can transform/translate into spirit of helping/positive change

### Successful Family Council Projects:

- Resident tea
- Renovation of resident garden: families donated flowers; participation of families and residents- hosting tea in garden; ceremony to open new garden; activation staff growing plants; music; grow vegetables; care of garden done by residents; invitation to community organizations to participate/facilitate programs to arrange flowers

- Theatre company/dance company- therapeutic dance/music for residents with more advanced impairment
- Craft days for residents (i.e. special holidays)
  - Involved volunteers, staff, FC
  - Supplies brought in by staff
  - Bring down each unit separately to reduce chaos and distraction
  - Volunteers: 4, Residents: 25 (1:4 ratio)
- Family Council Week
  - Education day: speakers and topics that family, staff, and residents benefit from e.g. pain management
  - Planning involved: audio visual equipment, speaker, panel discussion
  - 2-hours long; staff received education credits for participation
  - Management moderated question period
  - Consulted with clinical educator re: potential partnership with education institution and associations for small homes who don't have an education program and dedicated educator
- Bulletin boards installed to post announcements, memos, advertisements, puzzles, articles, news, memory exercises etc...
- Distribution of information (brochures & booklets e.g. Residents' Bill of Rights)
- Local Homes meet quarterly to network
- Turned bench of dementia wing into 'real' bus stop that stopped wandering in unit; city contributed props to make authentic
- Fundraising: assign project leader, divide responsibilities, regular updates

#### Key success factors

- Communication & buy-in are critical
- Don't give up when you get told 'no,' next time you might get a 'yes'
- Bring success stories from other Homes- shows value of regional meetings
- Dedicated project leads to keep people informed
- Clear roles & open communication
- Connection: project volunteers and attendees & among people in general
- Money is nice, but action/connection/communication are key!
- Projects can be "baby steps" in direction of bigger change- always move forward

## Research

**Description:** Research plays an integral role within the parameters of a family council. It guarantees that members are informed and up to date on current news, trends, statistics and legislative proceeds that impact their long term care home and loved one within the home. Good research equips us with the tools to be knowledgeable and make good decisions. Without proper research family councils can find themselves in the lurch, facing changes and issues that they are either unprepared for or ill-informed of. Research prepares us to always put our best foot forward within the context of a family council.

### General points

- Survey methods can be problematic
- Implementation of research: best practice guidelines available
- Research doesn't need to be complicated
- Research could be designed by anyone (need to ensure robust method)
- Beneficial side effects of research: families and residents engaged in process
- Research should be applied; what is it delivering?
- Is the data we are collecting really improving quality of life?
- Difference between statistics & research
- Research should aim to change lives of home's residents
- What do you do with all that data, and it's often outdated
  - Very important point as speed of change is increasing

### Why do research?

- What are the issues and realities? Need data to support
- What are the solutions? Move beyond simple statements
- Data should be integrated into LTC Home business plans:
  - What are the concerns? And compare to other LTC Homes
  - Plans presented by management
  - Should support transparency around planning and decision making in LTC

### Family Contribution to Research

- Data collection
- Survey assistance
- Meaningful engagement with residents, getting to know residents

### Conducting good research

- Use credible information- make sure your sources are reliable
  - Public library
  - LHIN (local health integration network)
  - CIHI (Canadian Institute for Health Information <https://www.cihi.ca/en>)
  - Ministry of Seniors' Affairs
  - Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Clarify the purpose of the research: write proposals in clear language
  - For whom is the research being done?

- Why do this research?
- Need to clarify research priorities
- Quality of Life data is missing

#### Questions:

- Why not more clinical trials in LTC re: Alzheimer's disease and drugs?
  - Answer: concern around getting consent
- Why doesn't the public typically hear a lot about what research is going on or results available?
  - Answer: Alzheimer's Society could be a good resource to point to what's available
- How to ensure rigour in research? How to evaluate the best way to conduct research? What methods?
- How to get people to engage with research?
- Who defines what gets done? Are these the relevant research questions?

## Peer Support

**Description:** Peer Support is an integral aspect of a Family Council. How can your Council effectively build and support a culture of peer support?

#### Important success factors

- Maintain confidentiality
- Flexible agenda, share experiences
- Supportive administration
- Skill sets of members: make your known!
  - Mediation for conflict
  - Facilitation skills for open forum, effective meetings

#### Ways to build effective peer support

- Designated FC member per unit/wing
- One-on-one conversations
- Mentorships: checking in regularly with families
- Separate meeting for peer support
- Memorial of deaths: honour, check in
- Social events, dinner on a unit
- Share how to solve small issues together
- Celebrate!
  - Standing ovations
  - Anniversary celebrations
- Have fun!