

A CASE OF MISSING LAUNDRY

At Focused Health and Happiness Care Center, the resident and family satisfaction survey results consistently identified missing laundry as an area that triggered low satisfaction scores for the last 3 years. The administrator had the DSD in service all laundry and direct care staff on the importance of handling resident's personal clothing in a careful manner while following the procedures of inventory, labeling, sorting and returning personal clothing items to their rightful owners. This training was done each year for two years after receiving the satisfaction report. Despite these annual in-services, the residents are still losing clothing on regular basis. In July FHHCC went through their annual survey, and during the Resident Council interview, the surveyors heard from 3 residents that losing personal laundry is a chronic problem in this facility. A review of the minutes of the Resident Council revealed that every few months, at least one resident had complained about a lost item of clothing, and although the administrator and SSD assured the residents that this would be addressed, it still was happening. The facility received a deficiency for failure to resolve resident's grievances. The administrator and the leadership team discussed this problem and decided that a lack of knowledge on the part of the staff was not the issue. They decided that they needed to do some brainstorming with the direct care, supervisory and laundry staff to try to get to the root cause of their missing laundry problem.

RCA-Missing Clothing/Customer Service

Problem Statement: Residents and families having complaints of lost clothing.

Initial 'WHY' led to:

- Resident Rummaging
- Staff Throwing Away
- Staff Turnover
- Donation Process Non-Existent
- Poor Completion of Inventory Log
- No System for Family Doing Laundry
- Unlabeled Clothing

The team then chose a couple topics to take to the next 'why'.

- Staff Throwing Away
- Unlabeled Clothing

Second 'WHY'-Staff Throwing Away

- Heavily Soiled-no bags available in/near rooms
- Torn/Worn
- Resident Put in Trash

Actions: Look for availability/cost/ease of use of bag holders for resident rooms. Inform staff that the facility is not responsible to worn clothes. Purchase 2 hampers for shower rooms for worn clothes and train staff on use.

Second 'WHY'-Unlabeled Clothing

- No One to Label
- Little Time to Label
- Family Hang Clothes Without Informing Staff
- Marker Labels Fade
- Marker Labels Illegible

Actions: Contact label press company to cost/effectiveness of a label system to purchase. Train staff that clothes must be marked with name and not room numbers. Discussed process for labeling to occur for new residents and current with new clothes delivery.

5-Whys

Problem statement: Residents and families having complaints of lost clothing. Specifically, staff throwing away resident clothing.

One sentence description of event or problem

Why? Resident clothing worn, torn, or stained.

Why? No designated area or location for handling worn, torn, or stained clothing.

Why? Family does not get notified that resident clothing is too worn, torn, or stained.

Why? No defined process for handling worn, torn, or stained clothing.

Why? Lack of facility staff recognition of the need to handle resident clothing which is worn, torn, or stained.

Root Cause(s)

1. Lack of a defined process for handling worn, torn, or stained clothing.
2. Lack of inventory control and protocol for tracking worn, torn, or stained clothing.
3. Lack of family involvement in the process.

To validate root causes, ask the following: If you removed this root cause, would this event or problem have been prevented?

Next Step:

What if the results of your change show no improvement? The disposal of “worn, torn or stained may not be the root cause. Make the “Why” you are working on measureable. All goals for improvement need measurement. Having your team use the QAPI Goal Setting Worksheet provides the framework for your Performance Improvement. QAPI at a Glance provides instruction. Setting a goal for improvement and making the goal measureable and attainable will assist you in succeeding.