

The Health Care Advocacy Program provides trained advocates to accompany seniors on their medical appointments.

This aim of the program is to improve communication among the nursing staff and the Health Care Provider, residents and families. This increased communication “closes the loop” regarding medical concerns. Also, the families feel supported and more confident in the outcome of medical appointments.

The team consisted of nurses, social workers, a marketing associate, nursing assistant, medication aide, a staffing coordinator a medical records tech. and a resident.

Our team made a commitment to meet twice monthly as we began the project. As we worked in smaller groups on assignments we met monthly as a large group and weekly in our smaller groups.

Our challenges really started as we began the last phase of our project; coordination of receiving completed marketing materials, availability of nursing staff for group education of the program. I also noted group enthusiasm began to wane as we neared completion of the project which made it difficult to finish the last details.

I spoke with marketing personally to review the urgency and need of implementing the program, I did smaller group presentations to nursing areas, and I scheduled one mandatory meeting to review all materials.

My biggest surprise was how well we all worked together as a group and that each assignment was done on time and done well.

Experiments and takes risks, Asks what can we learn, creatively rewards people

Choosing and leading the group felt like a risk to me. What if they did not work well together or what if I were a poor leader. I now believe in myself to make good decisions and trust that leading people is really one of my natural skills.

In the past I would make decisions and not consistently asked others for their input. Working with this group has taught me that every decision is an opportunity for learning together and often the outcome is much better than had I made it alone.

I spoke from the heart when thanking my team. Each person brought such gifts to the group; I made sure each person knew how special they were to me when I publicly thanked them.

I think being a mentor will allow me to continue to grow using the skills I have learned this past year. I have more confidence now and plan on doing more collaborative work on the campus, lead groups to make campus changes and start smaller work groups to enhance work quality and satisfaction of care staff.