The “Thinking of YOU” Program: Specialized End-of-Life Programming

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Customer Service Leadership Project

Introduction

Kinnic Health & Rehab is a 68-bed, for-profit skilled nursing facility located in River Falls, Wisconsin. We identified the need to create a specialized end-of-life program. Implementing the program involved creating a new culture and way of environmental thinking by participating in active and compassionate approach to end-of-life care that ensures respect for the resident, family, and staff members.

Knowledge

Current Knowledge and Research

I chose this project because I saw a strong interest and need for additional end-of-life care services for residents and their family members. This project stemmed from the support and idea of the nursing staff. End-of-life is difficult for many involved, including staff. This project allows for staff to provide additional services to the residents and families they work with in order to provide and increase satisfaction and comfort for both the resident and their family during their time of need.

Objectives and Desired Outcomes

A desired outcome with this program is to enhance the overall experience for residents, families, and staff during the end-of-life care process. Our team wants to provide a higher level of personalized care, and create a more comfortable environment for our end-of-life residents. This program allows staff to offer and provide additional services to the resident and family members by providing a more home-like environment during this time of need.

Specific Goals

- Increased resident, family, and staff satisfaction
- Increased community involvement
- Creation of “Thinking of You” baskets and cards
- Provide Staff Relations/Death and Dying in-service for staff member in conjunction with St. Croix Hospice
- Obtain Reverie Harp

Methodology

The EASIER approach developed by D.E. Hussey and the PDCA cycle were used in planning and implementing the “Thinking of You” programming. This project’s success is based on the development of organizational cultural advancements. It is highly important to evaluate the project consistently, incorporate strategic planning and stakeholder input in order to continuously improve.

Methodology

In order to ensure significant success for this project a series of steps needed to be followed. The steps for this project are outlined below. These steps were created during the project’s initial meeting, monitored, consistently, and evaluated on a monthly basis in order to adjust and make improvements.

- Acknowledge the need and opportunity for project
- Conduct research and best practices
- Approval, team formation, and project brainstorm
- Engage community and increase donations
- Create “Thinking of You” baskets and cards
- Host in-service on staff relation/death and dying with St. Croix Hospice
- Evaluate project continuously, adjust, and recognize success

Program Highlights

- Created community awareness and involvement through donated items: rice packs, foot creams, playing cards, board games, quilts, battery operated candles, wall décor, table décor, lip balm, lotions, socks, teddy bears, sound machine, mandala coloring books, notepads, facial creams, lavender, colored pillow cases, prayer books, facial tissues, crossword puzzles, facility meal tickets, and books
- Made Mandala coloring binders
- Crafted “Thinking of You” baskets. These baskets are care packages that include meal tickets, teddy bear, lotion, lip balm, notepad, tissues, cleansing wipes, and a “Thinking of You” card (basket and card are depicted below)
- Developed and implemented “Thinking of You” card
- Enhanced staff awareness through Staff Relations/Death and Dying in service with St. Croix Hospice which provided staff additional education on how to interact with families and resident, how to be aware of and transition resident environment for ultimate comfort, and how to implement better customer service
- Improved end-of-life customer service and staff awareness through new programming

Summary of Success

This project has shown significant success. The measurements of success were based on increased resident or family satisfaction, increased stakeholder satisfaction, increased community involvement, creation of “Thinking of You” baskets and cards, obtain Reverie Harp, and increased staff education through in-service with St. Croix Hospice. Measurements of success includes the accomplished tasks listed below:

- Reached out to community to increase level of donations provided for the program
- Staff member donated Reverie Harp for resident and family use
- Created “Thinking of You” baskets and cards delivered to each resident during end-of-life care
- 45% of staff were provided additional education and training on end-of-life care

The graph below indicate the percentage of items utilized by end-of-life residents or family members.

Recommendations

In order to make continuous improvements with this project, Kailey Haas, Marketing and Admissions Director and Heidi Knegendorf, RN have been selected to lead.

I recommend the following to ensure the program continues to improve:

- Continue to collect donations from community
- Expand the program by purchasing a microwave and Keurig for families to use
- Provide additional education and training for all staff members
- Continue to seek feedback and suggestions from stakeholders involved

Aspects I would have done differently include:

- Conducting additional education and training sessions at an earlier date in order to train all staff and develop training for new employees
- Expand the program to include aromatherapy options
- Expand the program to include volunteer work