

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Clip 'N Save: Use This Assessment Form To Get To The Bottom Of Exiting Behaviors

They say all behavior has meaning. So to find out why a resident might be trying to leave your facility - or is finding the opportunity to do so - ask these telling questions:

1. Does the resident attempt to elope at certain times of the day or night? What's going on at those times that might be triggering the person to try to leave?
2. What does he/she appear to be trying to accomplish by leaving the nursing facility or care environment?
3. Does the resident appear to experience "secondary gains" for his exit attempts? For example, does staff fuss over the person after an incident? Does his family come visit right after an elopement attempt? How much attention does the resident get otherwise?
4. How does the resident's life history (vocation, current or past concerns and relationships, etc.) help explain his attempt to exit in the way he does/time of day, etc.?
5. Is the resident engaged in the facility? (For creative suggestions on how to get residents involved in facility life, see the next issue of Long-Term Care Survey Alert.)
6. Does the resident attempt to elope during times of low staffing or staff stress?
7. Does the resident attempt to elope more often during certain times of the year? "Holidays can engender a sense of loss even in people with significant cognitive impairment, making them more likely to 'leave' in search of their home and holidays of years past," cautions **Jim Schuster**, an attorney with the **Council for Regulatory Compliance** in Cincinnati and Washington, DC.