

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Crisis Intervention: Break It Up Safely: 7 Steps To Separate Residents Involved In A Physical Altercation

Physical altercations between residents require a plan and fast action. Here's what to do:

1. Coordinate the intervention with other staff. Staff will need to support both parties of the conflict, as well as attend to bystanders who might be frightened or disturbed by the incident.
2. Say the person's name.
3. Give short, easy-to-follow directions, such as "please look at me" or "please put your hands down, Mrs. Smith."
4. If physical contact is necessary to preserve safety, use a technique that contains the person's arms against his body. Trying to manage an older person's arms away from his body increases the risk of injury to the person.
5. Remove the people involved in the conflict from each other's sight. For example, you can do this by turning the individuals away from each other or by inserting a visual barrier between them.
6. Reduce arousal by reducing stimulation from the environment (e.g., remove any audience, turn the television volume down, etc.).
7. If appropriate, debrief each resident following the event. Assess the residents involved for physical injury or psychological trauma.

Source: Michael Partie, Director Therapeutic Options Inc. (www.therop.com)