

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Resident Assessment ~ Check Out This Useful, Time-Saving 'Identity Assessment'

Ask families to complete, send in this key form.

One of the best ways to get to know a new resident: Ask his family and significant others to tell you about the person. But give them time to mull it over so they can give you more complete information.

Best practice: Devise an "identity assessment" questionnaire to give family members when they admit their loved one to the facility, suggests **Reta Underwood**, an activities professional and survey consultant. That's the strategy she found worked well in her practice, noting that 95 percent of families returned the questionnaires within at least two weeks.

The questionnaire asked a number of questions including:

- What the person likes to do
- What time he normally went to bed
- What animals they had that were important to them
- Whether the person served in the military and, if so, what war and branch of armed forces.

Asking residents to share connotes that you care: The questionnaire let the family know that the facility staff was interested in knowing who their family member is and was, says Underwood. "We also asked for the names, addresses and phone numbers of everyone interested in attending family events or who wanted to receive the monthly newsletter."

Underwood kept a rolling index of the family members and would have an assistant call to invite them to special events. Having family at events reduces your need for volunteers, Underwood says. "The resident's family becomes the volunteer if they are present at functions."