

Birds of a Feather Roundtable Summary
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TOPIC: SUPERVISING PRIVATE DUTY STAFF

The following are the 5 most common issues discussed and recommended actions.

1) Field staff not following care plans

Recommended actions:

Enforce premise that work/services provided MUST match documentation in the home and the office care plan for

- appropriate, safe client care**
- to protect the worker and the company against lawsuit**
- to ensure workmen's comp coverage**

Encourage communication for updating and revising care plans so work always matches services authorized.

Routinely audit field staff documentation against care plan and office/client file.

Make unannounced visits with and without employee presence.

2) Field staff not staying within their scope of practice

Recommended actions:

Explain they could jeopardize their certifications and/or working status thereby affecting their potential income and livelihood. Clarify differences between care settings and job descriptions.

Explain they could jeopardize the well being of the patient.

Explain they are opening up themselves, their supervisor and the company to lawsuit.

Make it clear they can only be at the client's home during the time scheduled to be there and doing assigned tasks.

3) Supervising tactics not working

Recommended actions:

Try coaching style of supervision.

Lead by example.

Nurture caregivers to their full potential.

Teach/educate/coach instead of debate/demand/threaten.

4) Lack of understanding liability and risks

Recommended actions:

Make it clear licensed and unlicensed staff both have legal liability and inherent risks. Anything that causes damage or loss can prompt a lawsuit.

Inform licensed staff their high risk areas are medication errors and not reporting to appropriate providers. Inform unlicensed staff their high risk areas are falls and pressure sores.

Instruct all staff on the liability and risks involved with inadequate reporting regarding the client and their environment or problems with other staff members.

5) Unable to get “team” buy-in or loyalty.

Recommended actions:

Instill pride in what they do. Help them see they make a difference in people’s lives.

Value their contribution; acknowledge a job well done or duty above and beyond.

Empower them to be your eyes and ears. This will promote the team concept and keep you more informed.

Allow for open, safe, comfortable communication.

Remind them their segment of care is just as important as any other health care provider. Every member of the health care team plays a vital role... from the doctor to the private duty assistant.