

“Lessons Learned” – Arden Courts of New Jersey

1. Caring for seniors is and has been our top priority, but at the heart of that mission are the employees who embody our culture and ultimately carry out that vision every day. Serving others begins with honoring the dedication and many sacrifices our staff makes to ensuring quality care is possible.
2. Securing and maintaining the necessary tools, such as PPE equipment, to minimize risk for employees and residents is vital to ensuring safe, quality care.
3. Be adaptable! While standard services like programming, dining and even family or professional visitations are made difficult by government guidelines, our company leadership and staff have carried on these experiences and found creative ways to uphold the quality of life our residents deserve.
4. Making wishes come true: For over 2 decades it has been our goal to fulfill lifelong wishes or provide special moments for our residents in the form of our Heart’s Desire program. Even though we face great odds while navigating a pandemic, it has not deterred our drive to make these special memories happen.
5. Transparency and open communication are the backbone of any successful relationship, including the one had with families, residents and employees. As technology changes, so has our capabilities for different or unconventional forms of communication. So, we can keep families informed during uncertain crucial times.
6. Continued education and training are foundational to meeting the demands of an ever changing industry and the delivery of care. As new policies and standards are introduced, it is consequential that routine guidance and understanding is established so they can effectively be executed. This is not just a philosophy but is a practice that is monitored and adapted when necessary.
7. At Arden Courts, we understand that tracking and analyzing data is important for making decisions that are in the best interest of safety for all residents, families and employees.

Communicating with Resident Families/Caregivers During the COVID-19 National Public Health Emergency

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak causing much anxiety, uncertainty, and isolation among our residents who are no longer able to visit with their loved ones in person, Arden Courts is providing the following guidelines to all employees to ensure that residents may communicate with their family members and caregivers virtually, while also protecting the privacy of our residents.

Importantly, Arden Courts appreciates the need for our residents to communicate with their loved ones now more than ever, and understands our critical role in supporting the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of our residents. At the same time, the privacy of our residents’ remains of the utmost importance and we must take care in safeguarding and securing resident information, consistent with our internal policies and in compliance with applicable privacy laws. Accordingly, please carefully consider the guidelines below when facilitating live video-chat communications between residents and their family members/caregivers at this time.

- Consent. Obtain verbal permission from the resident or otherwise be able to reasonably infer that the resident does not object, when possible, to engaging in a live video-chat with his/her family member or caregiver.

- **Device.** Use a company device (e.g., cell phone, tablet, laptop) whenever possible. If there is no company device available at your facility, you may use your personal device at your own discretion, to facilitate live video-chat communication between a patient and a family member or caregiver. Employees are not required to use their personal devices. In the event an employee's personal device is used, employees are prohibited from recording any images, videos, or any other content on their personal devices related to patients. Employees are also reminded of Arden Court's Policy for Communicating with Patients and Families by Email which outlines the process by which employees should communicate with family members or caregivers through electronic communications. Please keep these guidelines in mind when communicating with families related to patient updates and avoid using personal devices for these purposes.
- **Methods of Communication.** Information Services will provide instructions on appropriate methods of live video-chat. Do not use any public-facing applications (e.g., Facebook Live, Twitch, TikTok).
- **Authentication.** Verify the identity of the family member/caregiver prior to initiating the live video-chat with the resident. Video-chats should be limited to a patient's family members, relatives, friends, or other persons identified by the patient as involved in the patient's care.
- **Privacy.** Conduct live video-chats in private areas (e.g., resident rooms), when possible. Take reasonable and appropriate efforts to minimize incidental disclosures of residents' information before, during, and after video-chats.
- **Cleanliness.** As a reminder, please sanitize all devices used to communicate with family/caregiver before and after any device is used for such purpose in accordance with the facility's infection control procedures.

Please contact your supervisor with any questions. Thank you for your continued commitment to the care, wellbeing, and privacy of our residents.