

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DIGNITY AND RESPECT?

To treat someone with dignity and respect is to make them feel important, valued, included, and appreciated. Sometimes when others don't treat us respectfully, we feel upset and may not feel comfortable asking that person for help anymore. At times, people living in long-term care experience this with other residents or staff.

DISRESPECT: AN EXAMPLE

You've recently started using a wheelchair and you notice that one staff member will come up behind your chair and push it without announcing herself or where you're going.

When you ask a question, you can hear the impatience in their voice.

You wonder if you've done something to offend her. You want to talk to a facility manager about the problem.

HOW CAN YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF?

If you feel that someone is not treating you with respect, there are ways you can speak up to try and change the situation.

- **Know your rights.** The facility administrator is required to give you a copy of your rights and post them in the facility. If you do not have a copy, ask for one.
 - **Identify who to contact on staff.** Find out who is responsible for responding to complaints. The facility is required to tell you who receives complaints. You can make your complaint in writing or verbally.
 - **Prepare to explain the problem and what you want to change.** Use “I” statements. Using “I” statements encourages positive communication and reduces conflict. Describe the situation (what is happening, who is involved, etc.).
 - Example: “This aide comes up behind my chair and pushes me without telling me she’s there first. It startles me. She doesn’t tell me where we’re going and when I ask, she sighs like she’s frustrated with my question. I feel bad about myself after our interactions.”
- b. Express how this is related to dignity and respect.
- Example: “I feel like she doesn’t respect me. She treats me like an object she can move around when she wants instead of a person.”
- c. Make your request clear.
- Example: “I would like her to let me know anytime she’s going to push the chair and tell me where we’re going before we move. I also would like her to use a more professional tone when we talk.”



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:
DIGNITY & RESPECT

HOW CAN A LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN HELP?

If you feel you need more support to make your case, contact your local **Boulder County Long-Term Care Ombudsman at 303-441-1173**. They will help everyone involved find a solution that respects the resident's wishes. No matter what, the ombudsman is there to advocate for you.

Federal regulations governing long-term care resident rights in the US Code of Federal Regulations at 42 CFR § 483.

State of Colorado regulations governing assisted living resident rights can be found in the Colorado Code of Regulations at 6 CCR 1011-1 Chapter 7.



Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

303-441-1173

www.BoulderCountyAging.org