

WHAT IS RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE/FAMILY CONFLICT?

What is resident representative/family conflict?
Generally, there are several instances in which you might be in conflict with your representative or family.

- You want something specific to change or would like to file a complaint, but your representative or family does not.
- Your representative or family has concerns about something happening to you in the place you are living, but you do not want to file a complaint.

Families often feel they are doing the best thing for their loved ones. They want to be sure you are safe, thriving, and happy. However, you may have a different idea about what is best for you, or if you are experiencing a problem, you may not be ready to address it. No matter what, it is your right to decide when and if something should change.

EXAMPLES OF CONFLICT

Example 1:

You would like to go out and take walks through the neighborhood by yourself every day, but your family feels this is unsafe because you've started using a cane. Your family asks the facility administrator to prevent you from going out, but this goes against your wishes and violates your rights.

Example 2:

You have been losing weight because you're eating smaller meals, which is your choice. Your family is worried you are losing weight because you are not being given enough to eat; however, you feel full after meals and don't want to eat more. You have the right to say you do not want to complain about the size of your meals.

HOW CAN YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF?

In some cases, speaking up for yourself can change the outcome even without the help of a long-term care ombudsman.

1. **Know your rights.** Moving into a long-term care facility does not mean you no longer have personal freedoms. You still have the right to make independent choices, the right to privacy, the right to be treated with respect, among other things. 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.
2. **Put yourself in their shoes.** Think about why your family might be disagreeing with you. Understanding their motivations may help, especially since many families only want what is best for their loved ones in long-term care.
3. **Use “I” statements.** Think about why this issue is important to you. What do you feel? What worries you? Help your family see your point of view. Consider writing down your answers to share in a meeting.
 - a. “These walks make me feel peaceful. I feel happy when I get to spend some time walking by myself. I’m worried that if I can’t take these walks, I’ll feel sad and angry that I have less independence.”
 - b. “I like small meals because I don’t feel sick after I eat. I am more comfortable. I am worried that if you make me eat more, I will have a stomach ache all the time and I won’t be able to do things that I enjoy every day because I have to lie down instead.”

Remember to listen to your family’s concerns while remaining assertive about your own wishes. They may accept your position, or you may find a solution that satisfies everyone.

HOW CAN A LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN HELP?

It's possible you and your family cannot come to an agreement on your own. Your ombudsman can help everyone communicate more effectively.

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.