

## Staff and Resident Satisfaction

Chou, S., Boldy, D. P. & Lee, A. H. (2003). Factors influencing residents' satisfaction in residential aged care. *The Gerontologist*, 43(4), 459-472.

It is assumed that a satisfied staff is more likely to share their positive feelings with residents and create a pleasant service atmosphere which in turn will promote more social interaction, staff care and involvement. That is exactly what a study done by Shu-Chiung Chou and her associates reported. In fact they found that "the significant link between staff satisfaction and resident satisfaction components suggest that the greatest potential for ensuring a high level of resident satisfaction is by enhancing staff satisfaction, especially in nursing homes."

Although staff satisfaction has a direct impact on staff retention and service quality, little research has been done on various components affecting staff satisfaction. The components measured by Chou and her team were personal job satisfaction, workload, team spirit, training and professional support.

The following strategies were suggested as examples that may promote staff satisfaction:

- Organizing regular in-service training programs that provide opportunities for staff to update their practice, skills, and knowledge.
- Arranging regular staff meetings that allow staff at all levels to discuss concerns and difficult issues, exchange information and ideas, and support each other to solve encountered problems.
- Educating facility managers and senior staff about the important role that they play and encouraging them to have a close and supportive relationship with staff. Policies or practices may need to change so that staff members receive sufficient professional support, are provided with a means to express their concerns and receive fair treatment from their supervisors.
- Establishing a resource center at the facility level, to provide education and training materials such as textbooks and videos for staff to access as required and for encouraging self-initiated learning.
- Sharing information, such as research reports, quality improvement tools, and education and training materials at regional, state or national level by establishing an aging care support and resource center.

Since the study shows that by increasing professional support all aspects of staff satisfaction can be enhanced. Researchers found it important for facility managers to discuss and ask staff how they might best provide professional support.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE:** Although hiring and keeping good staff is challenging, the overall benefits make it worth the effort. Not only does it take decent pay and good working conditions to attract high-quality and appropriate staff, staff must also be valued as an important resource, to be trained, encouraged, and empowered to deliver excellent care and to be praised and rewarded for such excellence. Nursing homes that are serious about meeting resident needs will want to make staff satisfaction a high priority.