



A SPOTLIGHT ON FAMILY COUNCILS

Families and those of importance to residents in long-term care (“families” in short) are the unsung heroes of the long-term care caregiver team. As dedicated volunteers, these individuals take on resident care from feeding, nails and hairdressing, to socialization, mobilization and escorting to appointments and translating. They are invaluable to their loved ones in enhancing both the quality of care and the quality of life.

On a community level, families also serve as volunteers for their family councils. These self-directed councils meet regularly to discuss how they can contribute to conversations about resident quality of care and quality of life. Their conversations are intended to elevate the collective voice of residents to management in a way that recognizes what is working well and points out opportunities for improvement.

It has been our experience that there is no limit to what a Family Council can and will do to help their loved ones.

The quality of resident life is the goal of Family Councils.

Quality can be defined as the intersection of a variety of indicators that promote and enhance the quality of life of each resident, ensuring dignity, choice, and self-determination.

Some of those indicators include:

- **Privacy** in the resident's room and in locations throughout the care home.
- **Food and Dining** experience tailored to each resident's care plan and preference.
- **Safety and security** prevent accidents as a result of complex health care needs.
- **Comfort** is a positive experience for all the senses, from admission through end-of-life care.
- **Autonomy** enables residents to make daily decisions, the best they are able.
- **Respect** by focusing on the individual, looking past the “story” of the disease or condition.
- **Staff-Resident relationship**, strong anticipation of and responsiveness to resident needs.





ILTCCABC

Independent Long-Term Care Councils Association of BC

Your provincial long-term care councils' association



- **Engagement** provides activities and social opportunities which meet each resident where they are.

Families who serve as advocates on Family Councils are acutely aware that these elements are necessary for the best possible long-term care experience. As a result, Family Councils elevate conversations that benefit families, residents, staff, administration and their community as they learn about limitations of funding and staffing, to name a few.

A FAMILY COUNCIL BENEFITS LONG-TERM CARE HOMES BY:

- Promoting open lines of **communication**.
- Providing administration and staff with **information** about concerns raised by residents and their families early. This gives senior leadership the opportunity to craft solutions before families turn to outside media or even licensing.
- **Building a trusted relationship** with those who care for residents; aligning priorities and seeing issues from both perspectives; enabling honest feedback for ongoing quality improvement efforts.
- Helping to **create a sense of community**.
- Family input increases the likelihood that **policy implementation** will be **resident centered**.
- Encouraging family willingness to **contribute time and energy as volunteers**. Volunteers can affect the quality of programming and decision making.

[ILTCCABC](#) hears amazing success stories from our family councils every month when we meet. We would like to “spotlight” councils who have shared with us their accomplishments (no matter how big or small) that impact a positive resident experience.

ILTCCABC invites your regional association of family councils to take part in sending us your stories. In 250 words or fewer and as many images as you have consent to use, please solicit stories from your region's care home Family Councils. We want to recognize their good work to make improvements, no matter how big or small, towards improving the quality of life for residents.

ILTCCABC will use your SPOTLIGHTS for the purpose of sharing in a newsletter, with reports we submit to the Ministry of Health, with media and, of course, with our representatives. We feel strongly that success breeds success and inspires us to do what we never thought possible. We appreciate your family councils and have begun a plan for sharing this good news.

Please send “SPOTLIGHTS” (Word or Excel, for example) to: iltccabc@gmail.com