

Session 5: Memorials

Best Practices:

Planning a memorial:

Note: Most facilities opt for non-denominational celebrations of life

Involve the residents?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember: memorials are for the benefit of the living • Can be done by the resident before they die (celebration of life party) • Get resident feedback on what they would like • Have residents write their own obituary
Who should attend?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the family? • OR just for staff and residents?
Frequency?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 6 months? Annually? • Get feedback from residents and staff as to what they would like
Who will coordinate?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities Director • Social Services • Chaplain • Hospice in conjunction with facility staff • Can be a combination of departments!

Memorial ideas:

- Release butterflies (dependent on time of year)
- **Do not** release balloons (dangerous to wildlife)
- Read obituary (written by resident or family members)
- Sing/play music
- Light a candle next to a photo
- Have a memorial tree at Christmas with customized ornaments (photo and name of deceased resident) and send ornament to family afterward
- Video montage that includes both their time in the home, and when they were younger
- Offer food and refreshments

Grief Support Dos and Don'ts:



Help yourself and others

- Relationships are critical to our well-being.
- When someone dies, that connection can be a source of pain.
- Supporting grieving persons can help.
- These Do's and Don't's are based on 60+ hours of conversation with persons living and working in long term care.
- Their advice comes from repeated experience with deaths and the dying.

Source: Alfa Bravo | Renderforest (Dr. Toni Miles)

✓ DOS	✗ DON'TS
✿ Reach out	✿ Be afraid of emotions
✿ Be a listening ear	✿ <i>Say I know how you feel or Get over it</i>
✿ Show care	✿ Fear naming the loss
✿ Attend memorials	✿ Judge their responses
✿ Walk the bereaved	✿ Rush the process

Discussion Questions:

- Do we have regular memorials for those who have died? Do we have compassionate and respectful practices surrounding the death of a resident in our home/care community?
- When planning memorials, how can we remain sensitive to the feelings of families of our deceased residents? Understanding that some want memorials, and some do not.
- In what ways can our memorials allow everyone to give and to receive bereavement care?