

Cura Hospitality's Culture Change Guide Recognized with National Award from Food Management Magazine

By Lori Boone

Nursing and dining systems would seem to be very fundamental: nurses do nursing, dining staff does food, right?

Not if you want the best possible person-centered care experience in the most homelike environment, Cura Hospitality has found. Changing the mindset so that the two go hand-in-hand is a major component of Cura's award-winning Culture Change Guide.

Cura, headquartered in Pittsburgh and provides food service at more than 50 hospitals and senior living communities in the mid-Atlantic area, is a member of the Eat 'n Park Hospitality Group. Its Culture Change Guide recently was nationally recognized with an honorable mention from Food Management Magazine's 2010 Best Concepts Award.

Deb Santoro, Cura director of training and development, serves on the culture change committee made up of operators and clients who created the guide in part by studying best nationwide practices and addressing administrators' wish lists.

Santoro said education and training is a major component of how to successfully make the transition from the traditional "medical model" of continuing care to a "resident-centered" experience. But culture change is more than just changing the appearance of the facility, for example with alternative kitchens such as pantry and country kitchens and green spaces.

Cura was able to make administrators' visions of creating a partnership between nursing and dining staffs a reality. The practice is now in effect in different phases at every facility Cura serves. Hurdles vary at each place, Santoro said, with most requiring some physical redesign to accommodate the necessary equipment.

Providence Point in Pittsburgh's South Hills, which is just over a year old, started out with the concept. Even so, administrators had to deal with the culture change.

"Part of the struggle was (overcoming) the old mentality that food service does it all and nurses only do nursing," Cheryl Torre-Rastetter, Cura general manager at Providence Point, said. Upon hire, nurses are now educated as part of the process that food service is shared.

Nurses are trained in food safety, including in the areas of recording and keeping correct temperatures, cross-contamination, allergies and sanitation. Food serv-

ice workers, typically trained to carry their work through to consumption, had to learn to hand it off.

"It really was a large learning curve. It took a good six months and a lot of patience," Torre-Rastetter said, adding managers were on-scene a lot and meetings were common.

The result? "Ninety to 95 percent of the staff is really buying into the program and seeing the rewards," she said.

She said nurses can do some food preparation such as scrambled eggs or sandwiches if a need arises in an off-time. "It really does offer flexibility for that resident," she said.

She said it's more productive to have another certified nurse assistant on a unit helping occasionally with food than to bring in a food service worker. She said the CNAs also found they enjoy the break in routine.

The obvious benefit to patients? They can eat at their own pace, and they're eating more. The obvious benefit to facilities? Much less use of supplements, such as Ensure, and more efficiency, Torre-Rastetter said.

Santoro stresses that the guide's not complete. "We're all still on the journey." She said everyone recognizes the need that in order to stay competitive, "we need to stay on this path."

Santoro added that the committee's next step will be to reflect, then look at what's next. The committee will examine to what extent residents should be participating in menu planning and setting tables, "a whole process of getting closer and closer to home," she said.

"There's nothing more exciting than seeing this kind of change take place. It's inspirational for all the leaders in the field," she said.

Cura will also continue to change the food service culture in "memory support



Cura chefs and residents participate in a Growers Day.

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LEADERSHIP PROFILE



Name: LuAnn Onufer

Organization: Gateway Hospice

Title: Director of Clinical Services

Years at current position: Started position June 2010

Education: Associate Degree in Science CCAC South '91; BSN Carlow College '97"

What's your favorite part of a typical day? There are no typical days. That's what I love about my job, new challenges and opportunities every day.

Your philosophy of success? "Bloom where you are planted." Wherever you are you can turn your situation into a success.

Person you admire most? My mother, for her strength, love, support and passion for her family.

Biggest challenge confronting healthcare today? Reimbursement cuts. This will require creativity and diligence to maintain ongoing quality care.

What advice would you offer young people considering a career in healthcare? Even with challenges it is still a rewarding career with diverse opportunities.

neighborhoods,” skilled-nursing areas focusing on special-needs residents with afflictions such as dementia or Alzheimer’s.

Santoro said there will be a huge emphasis on stressing relationships and connections with staff by having them sit with residents at mealtimes and maybe even eat with them, engage in conversation and reduce outside distractions.

The use of color-contrasting plates and clear glasses also has shown to increase food intake up to 43 percent, she said.

Also, increasing finger foods to encourage independence and preserve a dignified environment is another area to explore, Santoro said.

“It’s a total subgroup within culture change,” she said. “It’s exciting.”

For more information, visit <http://www.curahospitality.com>. †



Residents enjoy a Cura-Sponsored Nutritional Tour.

Cura Nationally Recognized for Culture Change Guide by Food Management’s Best Concept Competition

Cura Hospitality, a dining services provider headquartered in Pittsburgh specializing in senior living and healthcare, was nationally recognized with an honorable mention for the creation of the Cura Culture Change Guide by Food Management (FM) Magazine’s 2010 Best Concept Awards competition, which recognizes and celebrates innovative thinking and practice in onsite foodservice. The goal of the Best Concept Awards program is to recognize these innovations and the organizations and teams responsible for them...allowing onsite operators to manage foodservice more successfully, more efficiently and to better meet customer expectations.

The Cura Culture Change guide is a comprehensive tool that aids administrators to enhance the quality of life for assisted living and skilled care residents by providing the steps and information requirements to transition dining and hospitality services from a medical model to a person-centered care experience that creates a home-like environment, while improving the work satisfaction levels of staff.

In the guide, Cura provides the step-by-step process, tools and resources that help to enhance daily living including how to: incorporate home-style dining services that helps to promote socialization; improve nutrition among residents; procure equipment for alternative kitchens so residents (with staff assistance) may prepare their own foods; design outdoor and green spaces that helps to improve residents’ health; create gardens where residents may harvest foods that are used in the preparation of daily menu items; and most importantly, train our staff and clients’ staff to provide personalized services that re-creates the memories and family comforts of home.

“Our goal is to be a resource for our clients in implementing their individual culture change dining and hospitality initiatives – at whatever stage their community is in. Cura’s guide has something for everyone,” says Mitch Possinger, Cura Hospitality President and Founder.

A member of Eat’n Park Hospitality Group, Cura Hospitality is a highly responsive and innovative dining services and hospitality provider dedicated to a mission of Enhancing Life Around Great Food. Cura serves over 50 senior living communities and hospitals throughout Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Cura’s professionals provide hospitality and clinical care to more than 20,000 residents, patients and guests each day. For more information, visit www.curahospitality.com. †

Older Adults and Depression—Treatment Helps

There’s feeling blue once in awhile and then there’s feeling blue without relief. The occasional blue feeling is a normal part of life. Feeling blue without relief can be a sign of what doctors call “clinical depression.” While clinical depression is a common problem for older adults, it is not normal. The good news is, for many older people, depression will get better with treatment.

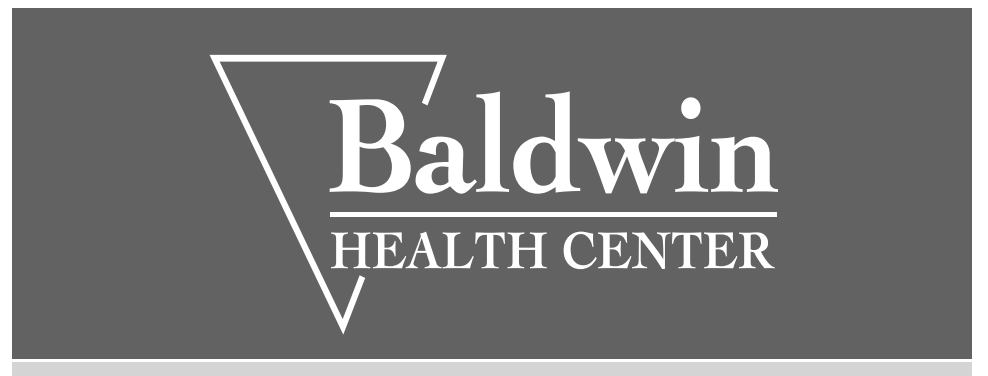
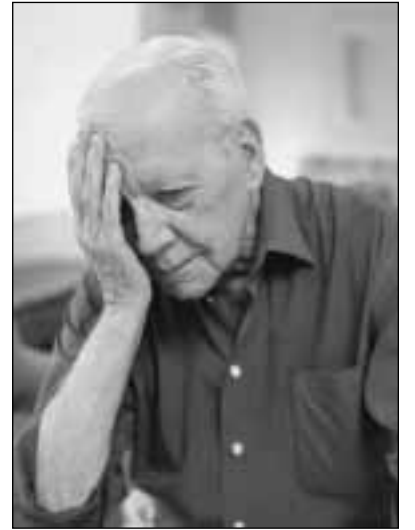
The University of Pittsburgh Late-Life Depression Evaluation and Treatment Center offers expertise in the area of detection of and treatment for depression in older adults. An evaluation at the Center can help differentiate between the occasional blues and the more persistent depression in older adults. This is a challenge because there are reasons why older adults show signs of the blues from time to time including loss of loved ones, changes in health, retirement, and even disability.

What we’ve learned is that the more persistent “clinical depression” does not come and go whereas moments of sadness following a bad day or an unhappy event tend to be relatively fleeting. Depression in late life includes certain symptoms that go on nearly everyday for at least two weeks. These symptoms can include feeling down in the dumps, little interest in activities, changes in appetite or weight, sleeping too little/too much, feeling tired, thoughts of guilt and of low self-worth.

The Late-Life Depression Evaluation and Treatment Center has been researching the effectiveness of various treatments such as certain types of talk therapy and the use of medications alone or in combination with other medications. Charles F. Reynolds III, MD explains that older adults who participate in his studies tend to do well/feel better primarily because they are the recipients of a lot of attention from the staff and physicians. Participants receive close monitoring of their depressive symptoms along with medication management. Additionally, family members are encouraged to participate in their loved ones’ depression care. In return for participating in research studies, evaluation and treatment are offered at no cost.

Treatment helps.

For more information, please contact Jill Houle at (412) 246-6006. †



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