



**THE  
DINING  
EXPERIENCE**

for the Non-Dining Staff

**An adaption from  
Healthcare Dining Services  
Level I and II Training Books**

By Wayne Toczek  
Adaptation by Cyndi Hilliard

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE DINING EXPERIENCE AROUND THE CLOCK AND MORE THAN A MEAL

The purpose of this Workbook is to prepare you for providing residents with a safe dining experience as a component of their care. You will gain the knowledge and skills to be successful as you handle food as part of your role in activities, the dining experience and offering between meal snacks.

High-level resident satisfaction and high ratings of the dining experience are important in the marketing of your community to prospective residents and their families. Food is one of the services that residents believe they should still be able to control so great importance is placed on food quality and excellent customer service. Even if the resident does not think it is important, their family does.

The target audience for this Workbook is nursing and activities staff and volunteers who handle food in the course of resident care. Since many communities use a self-directed program for orientation, this Workbook is written with that in mind. When the self-directed method is used, the completed Workbook should be returned to a designated person who will review the “Apply” and “Test Yourself” segments and discuss these segments with individual staff and volunteers or with a group when possible. Ideally, optimal training can be achieved by using this Workbook in an instructor led group.

The service of food requires both technical resident care and customer service skills. Service should be considered a component of the care you provide as a member of the nursing staff, activities staff or volunteer staff, including any other persons involved such as pastoral care, social services, etc. The manner in which you provide that care is measured as the quality of customer service provided.

You were chosen because you possess certain qualities that are needed for both components of the job.

- If required for your position, you have the required training/certification to perform the job for which you were hired.
- You have a genuine desire to serve people.
- You are interested in people.
- Show personal satisfaction in pleasing the customer.
- Are a happy person and you enjoy making others smile.

Place a  $\checkmark$  in the box before the statement below if this is part of your responsibilities in your community.

- Reminding residents that it is meal time
- Assisting with transportation as needed
- Serving beverages and offering refills
- Assisting residents with food selections
- Serving meals
- Clearing dishes and remains between courses
- Cueing or feeding residents according to care plan
- Monitoring compatibility of foods served to diet prescribed
- Recording meal consumption
- Additional roles as defined by your community

## CHAPTER 1: CULTURE CHANGE

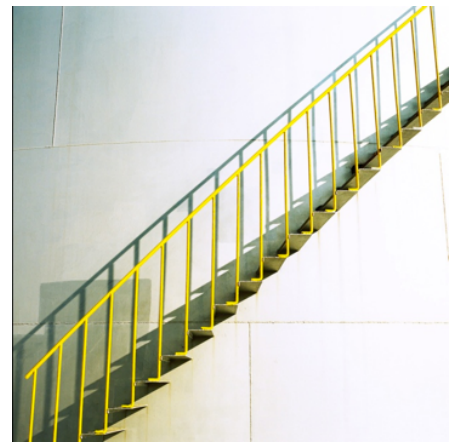
### CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY

Excellence in dining begins with a community culture that puts the needs of the resident before what is convenient for staff.

**It is a culture in which the staff climbs an ongoing staircase of little things that make life better, easier or more pleasant for residents.**

**Some of those steps will be the same for all residents; others will be different for each resident.**

**This culture is not limited to dining, but does include dining.**



The little things you do and say make a huge difference in how the resident, their friends and family perceive the community as a whole and the care their loved one receives. Think of each interaction with residents as one in which you will either make a deposit (positive interaction) or a withdrawal (negative interaction) from their bank account. For every withdrawal you will need to make five deposits to keep the account in balance. It is human nature to more readily remember the negative than the positive. Most of us more readily remember criticism than we remember praise. It is no different for residents; the negative things may be remembered for years.

## CHAPTER 2: THE MEAL - SHOWTIME!

During the service of the meal you will be called upon to play many roles:

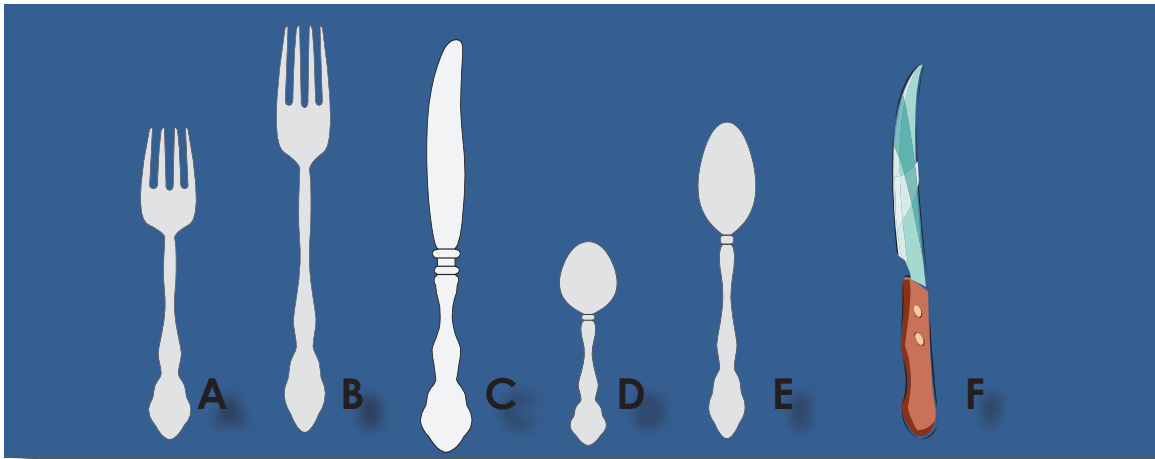
- Set-up for the meal
- Provide outstanding service
- Handle complaints
- Clean-up

### SET-UP FOR THE MEAL - THE TABLE

First, regardless of type of service, the dining room must be clean, uncluttered and in good repair. Whether a table is covered with a tablecloth or uncovered, it must be clean. Inspect chairs for food and soil. Report any broken or torn furnishings to the appropriate person. Fill in the blank: In my community the need for repairs is reported to \_\_\_\_\_. Check every meal, just as you would make sure that you do not have a flat tire before driving your car. Now you are ready to begin set-up for the meal.

**\*\*NOTE to instructor:** If nursing and other support staff does not set-up for the meal in your community, lesson may be reduced to include just enough information so they know what they should expect the dining room to look like each meal.





- Fork \_\_\_\_\_
- Salad Fork \_\_\_\_\_
- Steak Knife \_\_\_\_\_
- Soup Spoon \_\_\_\_\_
- Tea Spoon \_\_\_\_\_
- Dinner Knife \_\_\_\_\_ (called butter knife in some parts of the country)

**Double check -**



**Make sure the table top is picture perfect!**

## PROVIDING OUTSTANDING SERVICE

Service is defined as:

- the ability to provide assistance and/or a product - in this case, meals
- treating others as you would like to be treated
- the process of taking care of our residents, visitors and co-workers
- any contact between you and a resident, visitor or co-worker that can potentially cause a negative or positive perception



Outstanding Service is defined as:

- providing assistance and/or a product in a manner that exceeds the expectations of the resident, guest or co-worker
- providing service with cordial and generous interaction
- giving residents, guests and co-workers the feeling you are on their side
- giving residents, guests and co-workers the feeling that you are providing products and services for them, not doing things to them

**Customer Service** is a proactive attitude that can be summed up as:

***“I care and I can do!”***

## PROVIDING OUTSTANDING SERVICE - MEALTIME RESPONSIBILITIES



# BE ON TIME!

A good start will help ensure a good finish.

### The dining room is open—(Fill in the blanks)

- From \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. for breakfast
- From \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. for lunch
- From \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. for dinner

## TABLE-SIDE SELECTION

Place a ✓ in the box before the statement if this is part of your responsibilities in your community.

- When taking the order, do so in sequence. Pick a starting person and move clockwise around the table. Remove the menus (if used) after the ordering is complete.
- Make sure the residents' name and your initials are on each ticket.
- Indicate smaller portions and other resident requests as needed.
- Be sure to get all the details you will need - tartar sauce or cocktail sauce for fish, white or dark meat chicken, etc. This will provide great service and save you time.
- Write legibly and clearly. Do not be wordy.
- Orders may be on a single ticket for all residents at a table or on individual tickets for each resident. Which is the practice at your community? \_\_\_\_\_
- Turn in tickets before delivering appetizers, salads, rolls, etc. This will allow the meals to be assembled while the residents are eating their first course and reduce the feeling that they are waiting.

## PROVIDING OUTSTANDING SERVICE - USING A TRAY

One of the more difficult skills that you will be asked to learn is how to carry a tray correctly. It is important to learn how to do this properly to avoid injury. The trays we carry weigh an average of 25 pounds. Learning how to carry a tray will take some time; don't get frustrated if you can't do it right away.

Start with lighter trays and **work your way up.**

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN LOADING AND LIFTING A SERVICE TRAY

### LOADING THE TRAY

- Check that the tray is clean.
- Load heavier, larger items in center of tray.
- Load lighter, smaller items around edges of tray.
- Do not place soup bowls on underliners on the tray; stack underliners on tray and place each soup bowl on an underliner before serving.
- When stacking dishes with covered entrees, do not stack more than four high.
- Balance the load on your shoulder, and don't overload the tray.
- Separate hot and cold foods as much as possible.
- Prepare the tray for lifting; position the tray so it extends about 6 inches beyond where it is resting.

## HANDLING COMPLAINTS - SOME DOS AND DON'TS

- Do emphasize resolving the problem instead of finding someone to blame.
- Do act positively and use positive language. For example, use the word “concern” instead of “problem.”
- Do respond quickly.
- Do respect the resident/guest and treat him/her accordingly.
- Do speak to your supervisor when in doubt about what to do.
- Don't make excuses like “we're short.” This does not help resolve the problem, nor does it make the resident/guest feel better.
- Don't blame anyone. This also does not help resolve the problem, and it reflects poorly on you.
- Don't ask for sympathy or understanding. Remember, it's the resident/guest who has the problem.
- Don't argue. Nobody ever wins an argument with a resident/guest. Keep in mind that the resident/guest may not always be right, but he/she is never wrong.
- Don't get defensive. If you remember not to take a resident/guest's comments personally, you will not get defensive.
- Do correct minor annoyances before they have a chance to grow into complaints. If you sense that a guest is not delighted, make it right—right now. No excuses, no pity, no blame, no hassles.
- Do whatever you tell the resident you are going to do.
- Do follow-up to make sure the situation was resolved to the resident's satisfaction.

## CHAPTER 3: FOOD SAFETY AROUND THE CLOCK

### FOOD CODE - INTRODUCTION

Food handling practices are developed BY the USDA/FDA Food Code and State Food Codes based on it. These codes are federal, state and local law. These are the standards used by surveyors when assessing compliance in the community. The Food Code applies to traditional food preparation, service and cleaning operations as well as the preparation, service and storage of food at activities and in floor, unit and neighborhood areas. These Codes are updated as science indicates the need for change.

The codes themselves are hundreds of pages covering construction, equipment, purchasing, receiving, storage, handling and service of food. The very basic requirements are important to anyone who handles food are included here. If you have additional questions, the Dining Services Director for your community would be a good person to ask.

One special section of the Code, important in our industry is the section that covers special requirements for “a highly susceptible population”. The Food Code uses the following to describe a highly susceptible population:

“Highly susceptible population” means PERSONS who are more likely than other people in the general population to experience foodborne disease because they are:

- (1) Immunocompromised; preschool age children, or older adults; and
- (2) Obtaining FOOD at a facility that provides services such as custodial care, health care, or assisted living, such as a child or adult day care center, kidney dialysis center, hospital or nursing home, or nutritional or socialization services such as a senior center.”

Innovations Services offers products and services for the dining service industry. For more information about this workbook or any of our other products, please visit us online at [www.innovaservices.info](http://www.innovaservices.info) or contact us at:



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