

Engaging Residents, Families and Staff in Research and Quality Improvement

Macassa Lodge strives to build an inclusive community that reflects the diversity of the Hamilton area and respects every person's goals, values, and preferences. Our Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan guides us to consider a range of personal and social identities from the perspectives of residents, families, staff, and external stakeholders. Using this document, we map existing activities and policies/procedures and plan for future initiatives.

In 2021, we engaged in a research and quality improvement project with a cross-Canada team led by the University of Regina. This project focuses on adapting leading practices for essential care partners in LTC and includes homes from Saskatchewan, Ontario, and New Brunswick. One of our core principles is engaging as many diverse perspectives as possible. We implemented monthly Zoom meetings with residents, families, staff, and the research team to collaboratively design and evaluate interventions. Staff assist residents during Zoom calls, which helps to include persons with cognitive impairments and those who may be less comfortable with technology. All participants are compensated for their time, either through cash/payroll or gift cards. Based on the first series of meetings, participants indicated that better recognition of the caregiver role (e.g., caregiver IDs) and clear communication tools and processes were important to them. These ideas were presented to the leadership team and resident and family councils. Through 2022, we will continue working with residents, families, and staff using a hybrid virtual and in-person approach.

This research opportunity marks a significant shift from “doing for” to “doing with” and engaging residents and families in quality improvement projects. Shortly after starting this project, we launched another project to improve medication safety. We currently engage with over 20 residents and caregivers and are actively coming up with new ways to reach more of our community, for example, through in-person meetings, personal conversations, and surveys. Overall, residents and families report knowing more about what is happening within the home and strongly support adding more communication and feedback channels.

An essential ingredient to our Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan is the investment in capacity and resources. At Macassa Lodge, these initiatives are led by the Manager of Quality Improvement and championed by staff members with interest in equity, diversity, and inclusion. As part of the research project, we work closely with a provincial research lead who facilitates meetings and coordinates the research outputs as well as other team members who are experts in stakeholder engagement, knowledge translation, and quality improvement. Through these initiatives, our goal is to ensure that residents and families have control and autonomy over their lives and living spaces, and that this priority is reflected in how we operate our home.

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