

TOPIC: CLIENT'S FAMILY

1. **The family is an extension of the client.** Family may include relatives, friends, neighbors, former co-workers, and/or guardian with durable power of attorney. Family members are a valuable part of the health care team and important to the resident, because the family:
 - a. Can bring comfort to the client.
 - b. Offers knowledge about the client to the health care team.
 - c. Can provide assistance in caring for client.

2. **The family must adjust to life in the facility with the client. Some emotions expressed by the family during the adjustment process are:**
 - a. **Guilt** – family may feel like they are abandoning a client, or have broken a promise to take care of the loved one.
 - b. **Anger** – family may feel anger about losing control and responsibility for the care of the client. They may feel they are being replaced. Anger may be directed toward staff.
 - c. **Uncertainty** – family may feel uncertain about increased care for their loved one. They may be emotional when visiting and seem afraid, worried, nervous and tense.
 - d. **Sadness** – family may have difficulty coping with turning over responsibility for caring for their loved one to others.
 - e. **Relief** – family may feel relieved, since sole responsibility for the client's care has been removed.

3. **Communication and interpersonal skills are important when relating to the family. How the LNA/HHA relates to the resident's family reflects both care giving and the agency as a whole:**
 - a. Let the family know who you are and get to know the family.

- b. Create a positive and trusting relationship.
- c. Be available to talk to the family in a quiet atmosphere.
- d. Become a resource and support for the family as their loved one's primary caregiver.
- e. Wear a name tag and identify yourself by name and position.

4. Encourage visits between the client and the family:

- a. Have the room ready for a family visit.
- b. Remind a client with memory loss of the names of family members to make the visit more comfortable.
- c. Assist the client with grooming and dressing for the visit.
- d. The client has a right to visit with family and friends in private without unnecessary interruptions.
- e. If care is necessary during the visit, remember the client has a right to privacy.

5. **LNA's role:**

- a. Greet each family member with warmth, courtesy, kindness and respect.
- b. Refer family members requesting information about a client to the office.
- c. Report to the nurse if you notice a visit is stressful or tiring to a resident.
- d. Listen to family members' suggestions, complaints and comments, and direct the family to the office.
- e. Be objective. Do not judge decisions made by the family. Do not agree or disagree or take sides.
- f. Include the family in the care of the client whenever possible but never make the family feel that they are responsible for the care. Encourage the family to participate in the comprehensive care plan conference.