

Senior bullying: How to recognize it, how to handle it

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Things were different when I was a kid. People regularly drove while intoxicated. The high school archery team practiced on the football field while the track team ran around the periphery. Children bullied their peers without anyone giving it much notice. These days, drunk driving prohibitions abound, schools are no longer casual about teens with potential weapons, and children start learning about bullies in kindergarten.

When it comes to bullying in senior communities, though, we're still behind the times.

What is senior bullying?

According to the American Psychological Association, "Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words or more subtle actions.

The bullied individual typically has trouble defending him or herself and does nothing to 'cause' the bullying." Bullying that does not involve physical contact is sometimes referred to as "relational aggression."

According to senior bullying expert Dr. Robin Bonifas at Arizona State University, 10% to 20% of elders in senior communities experience bullying. Dr. Margaret Wyld of the ProMatura Group reports that senior bullying occurs in every independent living community studied in her 2014 report. In that study, bullying fell into the category with the largest relationship to whether or not the community feels homelike. Study participants described problems such as "difficulties making friends, being lonely, not fitting in, not having common interests, bullying by cliques, and missing their friends."

Increased media focus

Senior bullying is receiving increased attention in the mainstream media, with articles such as Paula Span's New Old Age column, [Mean Girls in Assisted Living](#) and Jennifer Wiener's [Mean Girls in the Retirement Home](#). ("Mean girls" tend to engage in gossip, excluding others and establishing cliques, while male bullies are more likely to yell and threaten.) Heightened media exposure for the issue increases the likelihood that potential residents and their adult children will be asking about bullying prevention when they're searching for a senior living community.

Steps to reduce bullying - In order to address bullying in long-term care, several steps should be taken:

- **Create policies and procedures:** Schools and workplaces have anti-bullying policies that long-term care organizations can use as models for their own guidelines. If your organization already has a policy that you're willing to share, please add it to the Comments section beneath this article. Also see the Resources section below for a sample workplace policy.
- **Train staff:** Employees need education so that they recognize bullying behaviors and understand the procedure to handle them within your organization.
- **Establish ongoing bullying prevention programs:** Preventing bullying can't be accomplished in a single staff meeting. It requires regular training and ongoing discussion with staff and residents. Some examples of programs to reduce bullying are bullying awareness sessions, civility training and interventions that directly address the person who is bullying.

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DATE: November 13, 2018: There were 17 residents and 2 staff members present at the meeting. Jodie asked the residents who would like to conduct the meeting stating that Resident Council is for residents. Residents asked Jodie to conduct the meeting. Staff was given permission to stay during the meeting.

FACILITY: Jodie discussed the completed and proposed improvements to The Lodge: The main bathroom has been repainted and has new decorations. Plans were passed around for the proposed addition behind the dining room. Movies, church services, and other activities would be able to be held in the proposed addition.

Jodie also discussed that the office moves have been completed but there will be some changes/remodel to the front desk in the future.

SAFETY: No safety issues were brought to the meeting by the residents.

STAFF: Linette talked to the residents about the changes to the kitchen. Erik has left us as the Kitchen Supervisor and Linette will be filling in until a permanent replacement can be found. Linette voiced her appreciation for the warm welcome back that she received. She also asked the residents to please take the time to thank Deb, Judy, and DJ for the extra work they have been putting in. Linette discussed what she is doing to get things back on track: There will be a consistent rotation of meals, Sunday will be the big meat supper again. Dinner Weekly Menus will consist of Beef 3x/week, Chicken 2x/week, and fish 1x/week. Linette also reminded residents to check the menus given to them so that they know ahead of time if they want from the optional menu à Last minute optional menu request = Last served.

Jodie discussed that a new CNA and a new kitchen staff will be starting soon



In the Spotlight

Robert "Bob" Fink

Where were you born?

I was born in Sidney and moved to our farm in Lambert when I was about a week old. Then I moved back to Sidney in the 7th Grade and graduated from Sidney in 1953.

What big events do you remember most from when you were growing up?

The World Series and playing with the county baseball team as a catcher.

What is different about growing up today from when you were growing up?

Today they have TVs, electronics, modern machinery, and better roads. In the old days, the roads were all dirt and gravel.

What was your first job?

Working on the family farm and then when I graduated I took over the farm.

If you won \$1 million dollars tomorrow what would you do with the money?

I would deposit it into savings and just spend the interest.

Do you have any hobbies or special interests?

I enjoy watching Girls College Softball in the summer and Pawn Stars. I am interested in seeing everyone equalized.

If you could go back to any age, which age would it be and why?

I would like to go back to my 20s because I would like to play baseball and travel with the team again.

What advice did your parents/grandparents give you that you remember most?

To work hard

Do you have a favorite holiday?

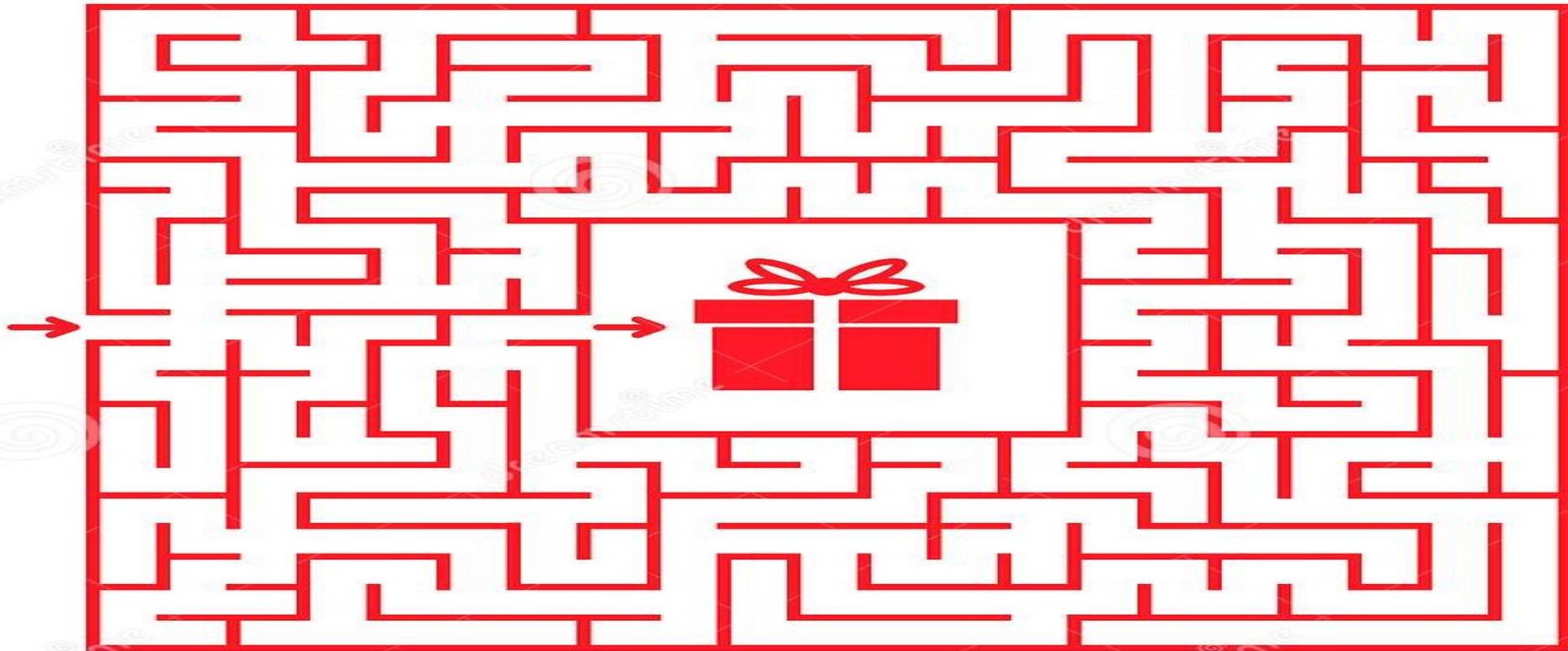
Christmas because everyone gets together.





2019

Happy New Year!



Resident Council, Cont.

RESIDENT REQUESTS: The residents discussed that they would like the black board removed from the dining area and replaced with a white one as the black board is hard to read. A resident also asked if we had someone that could do toenails for them. Jodie discussed that Sheona will do toenails for residents on an as requested basis, residents just need to speak with Sheona and request the service.

DOOR PRIZE: Ruth Miller won the door prize for being the resident in attendance at the meeting. The next Resident Council Meeting will be December 11, 2018 at 11:45 a.m. Meeting adjourned.



December Resident Right

You Have The Right To . . . Make Independent Choices

- Make personal decisions, such as what to wear and how to spend free time
- Reasonable accommodation of one's needs and preferences
- Choose a physician
- Participate in community activities, both inside and outside The Lodge
- Organize and participate in a Resident Council
- Manage one's own financial affairs



Happy Holidays!