

NORMS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR NURSING HOME RESEARCH

PART 2: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH NURSING HOME PARTNERS

Conducting research in a nursing home is a **partnership** between the research team and nursing home leadership, staff, residents, and families. Part 1 of Norms of Engagement for Nursing Home Research ([a separate document](#)) provides a list of topics to discuss during an introductory meeting when inviting nursing home leaders to participate in a research project.

This document, Part 2 of Norms of Engagement for Nursing Home Research, provides suggestions to build and sustain relationships with nursing home partners after leadership agreed to participate in a research project. The suggestions are intended to promote mutually beneficial relationships that foster effective communication and trust.

SUGGESTIONS	ACTION STEPS
<u>Initial Communications with Leadership and the Nursing Home Community</u> • Ask leadership their preferred mode of communication, including type (email, telephone call, text, Zoom), time (morning or afternoon), and day of week. ◦ <i>Schedule meetings and activities with as much lead time as possible.</i> ◦ <i>If appropriate, send online calendar invitations and reminders for meetings/visits.</i> • Consult with leadership about processes to ensure that study information reaches key individuals (e.g., department heads), and to notify potential participants about the study. • Inquire if you can use existing communication systems to connect with potential participants; examples include text message groups, email listservs, standing meetings, app notifications, and others. • Learn about staff and resident schedules that may be relevant to study activities. ◦ <i>Also discuss changes to study activities that may be necessary if state or other inspections are occurring in the nursing home.</i> • To inform the nursing home community about the study... ◦ <i>Offer to host a Welcome/Introduction Session(s); if broad resident, family, or staff participation is desired, ask if the session can be added to the resident/staff calendar; provide written material and refreshments.</i> ◦ <i>Offer to post informational flyers about the study in common areas, such as in the staff break room and at the reception desk.</i> ◦ <i>Provide options for leadership, residents, families, or staff to contact you.</i> • Develop a database with communication information and preferences for each of leadership, staff, residents, and families.	

SUGGESTIONS	ACTION STEPS
<u>Communications and Interactions with Professional Caregivers (Staff)</u> • If not already determined based on communications with leadership, ask staff how they prefer to receive study information and updates; examples include text messages, professional or personal email, and others. • When conducting interviews, ask staff when and where they would like to meet, taking into account privacy needs.	
<u>Communications and Interactions with Residents</u> • Appreciate that the nursing home is the resident's home; respect the resident's space and schedule, including preferred activities and meals. • Inquire about preferred practices. ◦ <i>Ask residents how they want to be addressed (by first or last name); avoid words like "honey" or "sweetie."</i> ◦ <i>Ask residents where they would like to meet, such as in their own room or a conference room, taking into account privacy needs especially if the resident has a roommate.</i> • Consider residents' needs in advance. ◦ <i>Identify and respond to communication needs, such as by use of a pocket talker, quiet space, visual aids, interpreter, or (if necessary) a preferred person to accompany the resident.</i> ◦ <i>Be aware of mobility needs to promote engagement, such as providing assistance to the room where study activities occur.</i> ◦ <i>Keep information concise and easy to understand.</i> • Communicate with residents directly if possible; avoid engaging nursing home staff or others as intermediaries. • Be equipped with signs to post on doors such as "meeting in progress; do not disturb;" confer with leadership and roommates in advance to ensure a sign may be posted and would not interrupt care (e.g., a medication pass).	
<u>Communication and Interactions with Care Partners (Families)</u> • If the study entails contact with families, ask residents (if able) or leadership which family member to contact, and the contact information. • Identify communication preferences if the study allows (e.g., in-person, telephone, Zoom); if in-person, identify convenient and private places to meet. • Inquire how families want to receive study updates, examples being text messages, email, video links that can be shared, and others.	

SUGGESTIONS	ACTION STEPS
<u>Engagement Throughout the Study</u> • If asked when at the nursing home, introduce yourself and why you are there. ◦ <i>Bring a photo ID/name tag.</i> • Before any visits or activities occur, provide reminders of what will be involved and what information you need. • Show appreciation on a regular basis such as by providing a certificate of participation; sending thank you notes or holiday cards; and bringing food (e.g., donuts, pizza) ◦ <i>Ask leadership, staff, and residents what would be most meaningful.</i> ◦ <i>More substantial offerings include donations for staff or resident funds, gift cards, practical university swag such as blankets (not mugs), plants for gardens, continuing education units for staff, and others.</i> ◦ <i>If appropriate, offer to assist with tasks such as helping residents write holiday cards or providing other supportive interactions. Note: if you engage in these or other activities, confer with leadership to ensure doing so is appropriate.</i> • Be transparent about study progress; develop a process to communicate throughout the study. ◦ <i>Identify milestones to celebrate, such as the study achieving enrollment goals and end of study celebrations.</i> • On an ongoing basis, offer to provide resources and information that may be of interest (e.g., articles, reports, in-service presentations). • Be flexible and patient. ◦ <i>Nursing homes are often understaffed, and unexpected events occur on a regular basis; leadership and staff require your flexibility but are not always able to be flexible themselves.</i> • Respect your partners by being on-time, communicative, and organized regarding all study activities.	

SUGGESTIONS	ACTION STEPS
<u>End of Study Communications and Dissemination</u> • Discuss with leadership the possibility of sustaining interventions or resources after study end and what is necessary for sustained use. • Share study findings with nursing home partners. ◦ <i>Consider the different audiences – leadership, staff, residents, families – and whether different contents and formats are needed for each (e.g., presentation to Resident Council, mailing, Facebook page, email, QR code, video)</i> • External dissemination ◦ <i>Confer with leadership whether participation can be publicly acknowledged.</i> ◦ <i>Invite partners to participate in panels/presentations; provide funds if possible.</i> • If indicated, discuss with leadership how staff can be recognized, such as a written commendation recognizing their contributions.	
<u>Sustaining the Partnership After Study Completion</u> • Remain in contact with nursing home leadership. ◦ <i>Offer to provide in-service presentations.</i> ◦ <i>Offer to participate in conferences/presentations that leadership attend.</i> • Explore opportunities to engage students to visit residents and volunteer time.	