

Meeting Advancing Excellence Goals with The Eden Alternative

Advancing Excellence Goal: Reducing Pressure Sores

By Denise Hyde

Description & rationale: A pressure ulcer is a painful wound that can lead to hospitalization and even death. A pressure ulcer can be caused by increased pressure on an area, poor nutrition and hydration, lying in a wet or damp bed, or having many chronic conditions. Working on this goal will help nursing home staff identify residents who are at risk of developing pressure ulcers in order to prevent their occurrence and help to identify pressure ulcers in their earliest stages to heal them quickly. The result is better care for the resident. In addition, nursing homes will reduce the high cost of care associated with pressure ulcer care.



How The Eden Alternative strengthens this goal:

Pressure ulcers are strong signals that close caring relationships need to be strengthened. When care partners are well-known to one another, needs can be anticipated and addressed before it affects the health and well-being of the Elders. When the Elder's skin is healthy, the well-being domains of growth, autonomy, securing, and joy are enhanced. It takes wise leaders (Principle Ten) to identify organizational systems that hamper the development of caring relationships among the care partner and transform those systems.

- Loneliness is painful; it kills. The antidote to loneliness is companionship (Principle Three). Companionship is easy to create for those Elders who are active and engaged in daily life. It takes a wise leader to create an environment where time spent with an Elder who lives with frailty is of equal value and importance in daily life. These Elders are often the most vulnerable to the development of pressure ulcers. Their care partners can see their role as less important because the Elders cannot speak, respond or “do things” in the same way as more active Elders do. The Eden Alternative has many resources to teach the importance of balancing “being” and “doing” in life.
- Mobility is an important element in reducing the risk of pressure ulcers. An explanation about how The Eden Alternative supports the Advancing Excellence Goal of Increasing Resident Mobility offers many examples of how the Principles and practices can help enhance and maintain mobility for Elders.
- Nutrition helps ensure good skin condition and prevents the development of pressure ulcers. The Path to Mastery Milestone steps and tools emphasize the importance of creating a meaningful meal experience as well as open access to snacks of the Elders’ choosing all day, every day. Some examples of what Eden Registry Members are doing includes making sure that an Elder can eat whatever she wants any time of day. This may include getting rid of medical diets or having a hot meal during the night, short order cooking at all meals, care partners (Elders, employees, and family members) eating together at mealtime, snacks available close to where the Elder lives, including their rooms, Elders writing the menus and including their favorite recipes, and slowing the pace of mealtime down. They are experiencing less food waste, replacing expensive supplements with real food, achieving better satisfaction survey results, and having less food-related complaints.

- Reducing urgency by creating a natural rhythm of daily life (Principle Eight), driven by the Elders needs, slows the pace of the day creating time for care partners to be gentle with the Elders. They have the ability to enable each Elder to have a good night's rest, which is important to healing. They are given the gift of time to focus on integrating products that decrease the incidence of moist skin environments which increase the risk for developing pressure ulcers. They take time to assist Elders at mealtime because there is no rush to finish. Cross-training of all care partners (including formal leaders) to assist at mealtimes, with an "all hands on deck" approach to mealtime, is an effective practice used by Eden Registry Members to slow the meal experience down. This makes it possible for the Elders to fully enjoy their meal.
- The Neighborhood Guide Training, offered by The Eden Alternative, includes modules that teach the empowered team skills in quality improvement. This includes evaluating, doing root cause analysis and setting goals for the team's quality data, including pressure ulcer rates. When the team is empowered, and given the tools and skills they need to participate in quality improvement, they are much more likely to hold each accountable to employ care practices that reduce the risk of pressure ulcers. The modules also teach good communication skills and create a Team Communicator Role that focuses on making sure that all care partners, throughout the day and the week, have the information they need to be the best they can be for the Elders.
- The Paradigm Buster "The Role of Policies and Procedures in Person-Directed Care" offers examples of how to weave culture change language and Eden Alternative Principles into the documents that instruct care partners how to do their jobs well. Keeping person-directed care concepts rippling through all aspects of organizational culture and process sets employees up for success. The same is true for educational events that teach skills for the prevention and healing of pressure ulcers. Weave culture change language and the Eden Alternative Principles into these skill-building events.