

Meeting Advancing Excellence Goals with The Eden Alternative

Advancing Excellence Goal: Prevent and Manage Infections Safely

By Denise Hyde



Description & rationale: Nursing home residents are vulnerable to infections. Implementing key practices, such as hand hygiene and careful use of antibiotics, can prevent the development and spread of more complicated antibiotic resistant infections in the nursing home setting. Working on this goal will help nursing home staff use evidence-based practices to identify, monitor, and decrease the number of in-house acquired infections to protect residents, as well as staff, from such harm.

How The Eden Alternative strengthens this goal: A home filled with close and caring relationships is the key to ensuring that the spread of infections is minimized. When the tasks of supporting daily life are a high priority, time is the enemy and things, like washing hands or changing gloves, can be overlooked. Culture change calls on us to dig deep and look at organizational systems and processes that interfere with building caring relationships. This enhances the well-being of the Elders, specifically their opportunity to experience growth, security, and joy:

- The Eden Alternative advocates for the creation of companionship (Principle Three) among all care partners, (Elders, employees, leaders, family members, and volunteers). When we see interactions through the lens of companionship, instead of customer service, it is natural to slow down and prioritize health and well-being. When the Elders know their care partners are taking time to practice good infection control, it increases their sense of security.
- Eden Registry Members have worked through fear of infection control issues, as they implement the Principles of The Eden Alternative. They create committees to investigate the risks and develop plans to ensure safety for all. Placing genuine human caring at the forefront of all interactions, discussions, and problem-solving helps make sure that good medical care is applied well and wisely (Principle Seven) without dominating the lives of the care partners. In this way, they grow a cadre of experts throughout the organization, so that it does not always have to come from the manager/supervisor care partners. When care partners can overcome their fears of infection risk, it enables the Elders to grow.
- The Eden Alternative has one rule: *As management does unto staff, so shall staff do unto Elders* (Principle Eight). When management demonstrates a caring attitude and approach toward the health of employee care partners, this same caring is transferred to the Elders. Leaders must demonstrate the kindness and caring they wish to have bestowed upon the Elders. Then, trust is generated and care partners are much more likely to pay attention to appropriate infection control practices.
- Hand washing techniques are a mandatory skill that all care partners must learn. Doing so helps people grow in their roles and be safe (Principle Nine). Eden Registry Members are weaving the Eden Alternative Principles and practices into this, and other mandatory educational topics, to tie these important skills to their culture change journey. Leaders “connect the dots,” so that everything that care partners are being asked to do is tied to the organization’s vision for change. Examples of how to do this are included in the Paradigm Buster *The Role of Policies and Procedures in Person-Directed Care*.

- *Neighborhood Guide Training*, offered by The Eden Alternative, includes modules that teach skills in quality improvement to empowered teams. This includes evaluating, performing root cause analysis, and setting goals for the team's quality data, including infection 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 other accountable for good infection control practices.
- Eden Registry Members are involving interested Elders and family care partners in their quality assurance/quality improvement team. What a powerful way to have all of the care partner team educated about and engaged in daily infection control practices.