

# ADULT DAY CARE SAFETY

Adult day care is often all-inclusive care provided to an elderly population aged 55 and older. The services provided by this program may include primary and specialty medical care, nursing, social services, therapies and pharmaceuticals. Additionally, day-health service centers, home care and related health transportation may be provided.

The goal of these programs is to provide safe care and companionship for elderly persons who need assistance and/or supervision throughout the day. It creates a safe environment to elderly adults that can no longer remain home alone due to their physical and/or mental health limitations. This bulletin provides an overview of some program safety elements and suggestions to help with the safety of its participants.

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## EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Safety is an important part of caring for participants in an adult day care setting. Safety in this setting includes emotional and physical wellbeing.

### Emotional Safety

Emotional safety occurs when the staff provides care with respect and kindness. The staff needs to exhibit respect and trust to help show caregivers that their relatives are being treated with kindness and are content during the day. Ensuring safety of clients, having caring, friendly and compassionate staff available to provide one-on-one attention, engaging clients in stimulating activities and the opportunity for clients to socialize with others are salient features of care (Stern & Caro, 2004).

### Behavioral Safety

Management of aggressive behaviors and maintenance of outbursts are needed to keep all participants safe. Management of aggressive behaviors starts with performing a behavioral risk assessment during participant admissions and intake. If not in place, develop and utilize risk assessment tools to maintain a standard for participant evaluation. Have staff observe potential violent behaviors and prepare to de-escalate the event (prevent the behavior, redirect the behavior, maintain resident and staff safety while enabling patients to manage emotions and compose control) to help ensure the feeling of security and safety of others during an aggressive outburst (Joint Commission, 2019).

### Physical Safety

Physical safety can be achieved when the center maintains a secure environment in which doors are locked. This helps ensure that outsiders cannot randomly walk in and that participants cannot wander off. It is important to have a safety system in effect such as a badge in/out or a buzz in/out method of security.

## Environmental Safety

Environmental safety can be maintained by decreasing clutter. Those participants who use walkers, canes and wheelchairs will need free space to ambulate with safety. At a minimum, comply with your organization's policy and procedures as well as the department of health and fire regulations. Examine food preparation, serving and dish washing safeguards. Ensure exits are clearly marked and the path is clear in the event of an emergency evacuation. Ensure that the facility and surfaces are regularly disinfected.

## Program Safety

Safety in an adult day care setting is a continuous process. Some items to address in the process prior to participant arrival include:

- Performing environment of care rounds, including:
  - Morning walkthroughs for assessment of safety issues and/or concerns
  - Adjusting thermostat for temperature comfort
  - Checking lighting
  - Performing sanitation procedures to prevent infection
- Ensuring that sign-in sheets and participant check-in stations are monitored and managed for attendance, arrivals and departures.

## SUMMARY

Adult day care safety is important not only to the participants in the program but to their primary caregivers and day care staff. It is important to remember to continuously assess participants and their behavior at all times. Consider starting the day with a shift huddle to recap the events of the prior day in addition to summarizing the plan for the current day. This may be beneficial for helping assure that everyone is on the same page for safety.

## REFERENCES

- Stern, A. L., & Caro, F. G. (2004). Consumer perspectives on quality in adult day care. Retrieved from [https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gerontologyinstitute\\_pubs/4/](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gerontologyinstitute_pubs/4/)
- The Joint Commission. (2019). De-escalation in health care. Retrieved from [www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/23/QS\\_Deescalation\\_1\\_28\\_18\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/23/QS_Deescalation_1_28_18_FINAL.pdf)