

CITRA's Partners in Caregiving in Assisted Living (PICAL) Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the goal of the PICAL Program?

The goal of the PICAL Program is to promote positive communication between assisted living staff and residents' families to improve the quality of care for assisted living residents. In the program, assisted living staff and families are viewed as partners in residents' care where families bring their knowledge of their relatives and staff bring their technical expertise in providing care. Ultimately, the program intends to encourage and support the involvement of families in residents' care, which research suggests is critical to residents' quality of life.

2. Who can run the PICAL Program?

Any assisted living facility can choose to run the PICAL program by following the training materials, and that facility would determine who would facilitate the training sessions. Those implementing the program should have experience conducting educational programs in their own communities, as well as prior experience working with residents' families.

3. Who can participate in the program?

The program is intended for assisted living staff and residents' family members. Assisted living staff and family members attend separate trainings, but the content of the staff and family session are very similar and the basic communication skills provided are the same.

4. What is the structure of the program?

The PICAL Program is divided into two parallel workshop series: one for assisted living staff and one for residents' family members. The staff training is primarily structured as an in-service (1 or 3 hour options). The family training is structured as a workshop (1 or 3 hour options). The program ends with an optional joint session with families, staff, and facility administrators to brainstorm new facility practices and policies to promote better family-staff relations.

5. What are the different Training Options?

There are two options for facilitators to conduct the PICAL Program. The first option is a 1-hour long training. This option includes two 1-hour training videos for facilitators, one designed for the staff in-service training and one intended for the family workshop. The videos are accompanied by a training guide, which provides facilitators with instructions for using the video. The second option is a 3-hour long training. This option provides a more in-depth training manual (without videos) for facilitators to lead longer training sessions with assisted living staff and residents' family members. The basic curriculum is similar to the 1-hour option with the addition of more skill building activities and practice exercises. This option also includes a joint session with staff, families, and the administrators of the assisted living community at the end of the program.

6. What are the expected benefits of the program?

PICAL provides communication and conflict resolution skill training to assisted living staff and residents' families to improve family-staff relationships. Assisted living staff and families who participate in the program learn how to communicate more effectively with each other, how to avoid problems, and how to solve them when they occur. By "sharing the caring," assisted living staff and family members gain valuable insights that can improve residents' quality of care. Besides increased involvement of families and improved job satisfaction of staff, the PICAL Program provides potential health benefits to assisted living residents.

7. How to get more information?

For more information about the PICAL Program, contact the Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA) by email at citrainfo@cornell.edu. You can also find more information and training materials online at <http://citra.human.cornell.edu/pical>.