



## **Set the Standard: Make Training Part of Your Workplace Culture**

Let's be real — healthcare is a *BEAST*. The industry is intense, constantly changing, and it's no secret that keeping up with regulatory updates, shifting standards, and evolving care models is a full-time job in itself.

What we're seeing now is a major shift:

- **Independent living** feels more like the old **assisted living**,
- **Assisted living** is operating like old-school **long-term care**,
- And staff are being asked to adapt quickly to new expectations with little time or support.

### **Here's the truth:**

We can sit someone down in front of a computer, assign them a bunch of online courses, and have them take quizzes. But does that really mean they're *ready* to hit the floor and provide quality care?

**Absolutely not.**

Training can't be a box to check — it must be part of our *culture*. That means it's everyone's responsibility, from line staff to the administrator or executive director. It has to be **all hands on deck**.

### **What Worked for Me: Old School, Still Effective**

Every month, on the **3rd Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.**, we held a **mandatory All-Staff Meeting**. No exceptions — unless someone had another job or school conflict (with an excuse provided). This expectation was communicated during onboarding and reinforced in our culture.

Missing an All-Staff?

It affected your raise. Staff started with the opportunity for a 3% raise annually — and automatically lost 1% for each missed meeting. Why? Because training mattered *that much* to us.

### **Here's How We Made It Work:**

- **Regulatory + Monthly Topics:**

We took all the required training and broke it up into **12 months**. That gave us a core structure. We'd then layer in additional topics based on what was happening in real-time.

- **Leadership-Led Training:**

I personally led each training. No outsourcing, no random speakers. This gave me the chance to stay connected with staff, listen to their feedback, and ensure the message came straight from leadership.

- **Welcoming Environment:**

The room was **ready and set up** ahead of time. Always with a **theme** — for example, fall colors with sunflowers and a seasonal giveaway. It didn't cost much, just time and intentionality.

- **Food & Giveaways:**

Staff were welcomed with lunch and a drink as they walked in. Attendance was taken. Everyone entered a drawing. It was simple but consistent — and it worked.

- **Documentation:**

Each month's training had the topic clearly listed at the top of the sign-in sheet. We used this for:

- Regulatory compliance
- Annual performance reviews
- Staff reminders and accountability

### **The Bottom Line:**

Training shouldn't be an afterthought. It should be a **core part of your operations**, your team engagement, and your standards. When training becomes a regular, consistent, and positive part of workplace life, it stops being a "have to" and becomes a "get to."

Set the standard. Your team — and your residents — deserve it.

### **BUT!**

One monthly all-staff meeting is not enough. Every department should be holding **monthly meetings**—at a minimum, **bi-monthly**. Things change too quickly in our environment, and

“quarterly” simply doesn’t cut it. We all work different shifts, and leadership doesn’t always have the opportunity to interact with every staff member on a regular basis. That makes routine, structured meetings not just helpful, but essential.

**One of the most critical groups to meet with monthly is our STNAs/Care Partners.**

These meetings must include hands-on training and review of core care skills:

- **Use of Hoyer lifts** – Make sure every staff member demonstrates proper use, both as the caregiver and as the person being transferred. Everyone should understand what it feels like to be in that sling.
- **Feeding practices** – Practice giving bites using pudding. Reinforce patience and dignity.
- **Bed positioning** – Demonstrate and remind staff that beds must be kept in the lowest position unless actively providing care.
- **Frequent resident checks** – These are non-negotiable. Use meetings to reinforce accountability.
- **Catheter care, rinsing urinals, hand hygiene, and toileting basics** – Bring it back to the fundamentals.

These meetings aren’t just about repetition—they’re about **consistency, accountability, and visibility**. Monthly training ensures we’re laying eyes on our new hires to confirm proper training, and it also provides an opportunity to correct habits of long-term staff who may be cutting corners. Unfortunately, it’s often the “old school” staff who are among the biggest offenders.

This must be a **team effort**. The Administrator, Director of Nursing, Floor Nurses, Dining Services, Environmental Services, Activities Staff—**everyone** must be part of the solution. Strong, cross-department communication and shared accountability are key to maintaining the quality of care we all want to deliver.

Let’s recommend making staff education a regular, hands-on, and team-led priority.

**One of the quickest ways a community can earn a bad reputation is when a staff member isn't properly trained and a family feels their loved one received subpar care. That single moment can undo years of good work. A well-organized and structured training plan is key—not only to ensuring every senior in your community receives the highest standard of care, but also to rebuilding and reinforcing trust with the outside community.**

**Don't settle for one standout training session just to post about it on Facebook. Instead, commit to consistent, high-quality monthly trainings. Over time, these efforts won't just grow your social media following—they'll establish your community as a place known for excellence, compassion, and the best-trained staff in the industry.**

### **Leadership Training Guide: Making Training Part of Your Culture**

"You don't build a culture through policy. You build it through practice."

In healthcare, the pace is relentless. The regulations shift, expectations rise, and the lines between levels of care — independent, assisted, and long-term — are constantly blurring.

As a leader, you are responsible for not only navigating these changes but also helping your team rise with them.

And here's a hard truth:

► **If *you* don't make training a priority, your team won't either.**

### **Set the Standard – Lead From the Front**

Anyone can assign online modules. Anyone can hand out a test. That's not leadership — that's delegation without connection.

To truly embed training into your culture, it must be seen as *valuable* and *non-negotiable*. That starts with **you**.

### **Be Present. Be Involved.**

- Attend **every** staff training.
- Lead or co-lead monthly trainings — even just the first 15 minutes.
- Let staff see that leadership shows up to learn, not just supervise.

### **The Framework That Works: Consistency Is King**

#### **Schedule:**

- Monthly All-Staff Meetings: **3rd Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.** (adjust for your community's needs)
- **Mandatory attendance** — only excused for school or second jobs (with notice)
- Missed meetings affect **annual raises** (e.g., 1% off potential 3% for each absence)
- Setting a consistent, recurring schedule for meetings removes ambiguity, reduces confusion, and ensures accountability.

### Why this works:

- Predictability builds trust and habits.
- Attendance becomes expectation, no exception.
- It reinforces that training is part of their job, not extra.

### Build Your Training Calendar

Start with your **regulatory requirements**. Break these into 12 manageable monthly topics.

Example Core Topics (rotating annually):

- Abuse prevention
- Infection control
- Emergency preparedness
- Medication management
- Resident rights
- Dementia & behavioral support

Then, **layer in live topics** based on what's happening in your community:

- Incident trends
- Customer service refreshers
- Survey prep
- Staff-requested subjects

### Create a Culture That Feels Good to Be Part Of

How you show up matters. Environment matters. Here's how to make training a *positive* and *memorable* part of the workplace:

#### Details That Make a Difference

- Themed setup (fall = sunflowers, spring = light colors, etc.)
- Simple meals + drinks provided
- Sign-in sheets with the training topic listed

- Entry into a giveaway (gift cards, care baskets, extra break, etc.)

These small touches tell your staff:

**“We value you, and this time matters.”**

### **Track It All**

Documentation = protection + opportunity

Use each month’s sign-in sheet and agenda for:

- **Survey readiness**
- **Annual evaluations**
- **Coaching conversations**

### **Final Leadership Challenge:**

If you want staff to value training, show them how *you* value it.

If you want your community to feel strong and consistent, bring consistency to training.

If you want a culture of learning, be the **first learner in the room**.

**Make training a cornerstone, not a checkbox.**