

Are you giving person-centred care?

Q. What is all the talk I hear about 'person-centred care'? We give our residents good care and we know them well. Aren't we doing 'person-centred care?'

A. Person-centred care is a term coined to describe a shift in the way we look at the work we do and the people we care for.

In hospital and other care settings the focus used to be, and still is, in some places, mainly on the routines and preferences of the staff and management, such as: you showered, ate and went to toilet when you were told and when it suited the routines and timetable of others. This is most often seen in the routine that everybody is woken and showered or at least dressed by 8am ready for breakfast. This is task and staff focused care.

Person-centred care, on the other hand, allows for individual differences and preferences. Each person is known and their preferences are respected and taken into account when planning care.

Many facilities pay this lip-service by making a token effort to adapt a 'hospital style' routine to a more flexible style of nursing home or hostel care. However, their facilities are still essentially focused on tasks, staff rostering and routines that make life easier for staff and not on residents who are expected to fit into the regularity of the institution.

So, it may be that your facility is indeed person-focused. Or it may be that your facility is still trying to be task focused and paying lip-service to person-centred care.

Many aged care facilities that provide adequate care to their residents and pass all the Accreditation Standards, could be providing care that is richer with a quality of life for their residents that is genuinely based on respect for and valuing of the people they care for.

The challenge is to see what is possible and be unafraid to do it.