



**South Carolina Initiative to Improve Dementia Care  
and Eliminate Off-Label Antipsychotics**

Coordinated by LeadingAge South Carolina

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## **QUICK TIPS Stay Interviews**

Many nursing homes use exit interviews after an employee leaves to learn why they left, and if their leaving could have been prevented. They are seeking to understand why this person who looked to be so promising during the interview didn't stay. While exit interviews can be helpful in having some understanding of the dynamics that lead to a promising new employee leaving your employment, it will not change the fact that they are gone. An exit interview is a reactive response. It is in *reaction* to turnover.

A stay interview on the other hand is a *proactive* intervention that may **prevent** an exit interview. Stay interviews are quick check-ins with new staff to see how they are doing and if they need help with anything. The most effective stay interviews are done by either the Director of Nursing or the Administrator.

As the leader in the building it is your priority to make sure that your building is staffed. There is nothing more important. If you don't have staff to care for residents then your home will be unable to provide good care. It is that simple.

We recommend that stay interviews be done as informal check-ins on day three and at the end of the first week, and as a formal interview at the end of the second week. Stay interviews are new to long term care but have been used in other sectors of employment for some time.

### **1. Day Three Check-In:**

The day three check-in is not a formal interview. It is an intentional seeking out of the employee to ask them how they are doing. This can be easily incorporated into rounds. In this check-in you are deliberately introducing yourself to the new employee and getting to know them. As a leader in the building, you do not want to be in the position of learning that a new employee has left employment and you do not even know what they looked like.

In this check-in you are casually asking them how things are going and telling them in all sincerity that if they have any problems, they can go through the normal channels or they can ask you for your help. You want them to succeed. In this informal check-in you are establishing a budding relationship with this new employee.

This is not a group interview. If more than one person was hired at the same time, be sure to time your rounds to be able to get to each new employee and spend a couple of minutes with each of them. This is not a long chit-chat, rather it is a short way of your new employee knowing that they are on your radar and are important to your home.

### **2. First Week Check-In:**

At the end of the first week, once again seek out each new employee and informally check in with them. If they had any concerns or issues that they brought up in your day three check-in be



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sure to let them know what you have done. Because you have already had a conversation with them, this check-in should be more conversational. Tell them that you will have a formal stay interview at the two-week point, and that their supervisor will let them know when their stay interview will happen. Ask them to be thinking about ways they might suggest making it easier to be new at your nursing home. Let them know that you know how hard it is to be new.

### **3. Second Week Formal Interview:**

This is a formal interview. Figure out with the employee's supervisor a time that works best and schedule a 15 minute time to really talk through how they are doing. Prior to this interview, make a point to observe them at work, or to ask their supervisor how they are doing. In this interview, it is most effective if you can give them direct feedback. "I know it can seem overwhelming at first, because this is a big job, but I saw you at work, and you have such warmth with the residents, and that is what makes me know you have what it takes." This kind of feedback can be the intervention that keeps a potentially good employee.

Many employees may not be familiar with the concept of a Stay Interview and may view it negatively at first. Start off by explaining why you are conducting the interview and what type of information you'll be discussing. Tell them, "We want you to stay!" This is the time to show appreciation and let your new employees know how important they are to the residents, their co-workers, and to your home. Pick a setting where they'll feel comfortable and free to talk about the things that may concern them. Do everything you can to make them comfortable with you and let them get to know you.

Don't try to guide the conversation into what you want to hear. Instead, pay attention to what gets the employee excited and engaged. Probe deeper into any responses that are not clear or may have more behind them. This is not the time to get defensive if you disagree with their concerns or comments. If they voice a concern try to be creative in finding win/win solutions. Have a genuine intention to make changes as a result of this interview. Whatever you do, be sure to follow up, and by all means, keep your promises! Let them know of any action you have taken as a result of this interview. Remember, the purpose of the stay interview is to get in front of any emerging concerns the new employee may have.

At the same time, it is also important to be honest. If there are areas where you can't make the change they would like to see happen, be clear with them up front. Do not negotiate. Sometimes we get concerned with "what if" fears. What if I can't give what they want? What if they don't trust me enough to answer honestly? Don't be afraid of what your employee might say. Be honest and admit that you can't provide your employees everything they want, but you can listen to them, hear their concerns. Validate their feelings, review their feedback, express your support and assure them that you will do what you can to explore options. Start by making them comfortable enough to share openly with you.



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Stay Interview: 5 Questions

**1. How are things going for you?**

Probing Questions

- So far, how are you finding the work?
- What is the best part of your day?
- Does the schedule work for you?
- How are you finding working with our residents? The rest of the staff?

**2. Are you starting to feel settled in?**

Probing Questions

- Is there something that can help with settling you in?
- What do you like most about working here?
- What parts are the hardest?
- What do you like least about working here?

**3. Are you treated respectfully by your coworkers?**

Probing Questions:

- Do people answer your questions?
- Do you know where to find information?
- Are people nice to you?

**4. How happy are you working here on a scale of 1-10 with 10 representing the most happy?**

Probing Question:

- What would have to happen for that number to become a 10?

**5. Is there anything else that is important to you that you would like to share?**



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**New Hire Check-Ins And Stay Interviews For Staff Retention**

Newly Hired Staff's Name	Date of Hire	3 day Check In - Notes	1 Week Check In - Notes	2 Week Stay Interview - Notes

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