NATIONAL FALL HUDDLE INITIATIVE

SafelyYou

Best Practices for Developing an Effective Fall Huddle Program

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Adults living with dementia fall on average four times per year — twice as often as adults without dementia. Even with safety measures in place, the fact remains that falls will always be an issue for memory care residents, who are often confused and unsteady on their feet.

In a recent whitepaper, "The Ultimate Guide to Reducing Falls in Memory Care Communities During COVID-19 Pandemic," we shared detailed steps for creating a fall prevention program. We are now digging even deeper into the final step, "how to address the issue of unwitnessed falls," by sharing best practices to help care staff develop an effective fall huddle program to reduce the occurrence of repeat falls.

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1. WHAT IS A FALL HUDDLE?

Before we can get into the nuts and bolts of setting up a program, it's important to explain the concept of a fall huddle:

WHAT An Interdisciplinary meeting for care staff to review the fall incident documentation, examine the root-cause analysis and determine action items to prevent future falls.

WHY The benefits include accurate reporting, improved coordination among team members and the ability to analyze effectiveness of interventions.

WHO Attendees may include executive director, nursing, activities coordinator, maintenance, direct care staff and a designated "fall champion."

WHEN Fall huddles should take place immediately (within one hour) following the fall event. Key personnel should attend to ensure all proper documentation is collected and any interim interventions can be implemented. Additionally, the community should hold a formal meeting with the interdisciplinary team once a week.

Role of the Fall Champion

- Individual designated to lead community fall prevention efforts
- Monitors effectiveness of interventions
- Coordinates staff in-services and ongoing education related to falls
- Collects fall data and shares results

2. ASSESSING RESIDENT FALLS WITH VIDEO REVIEW

SafelyYou's community data reveals that 70% of falls occur in a resident's bedroom. Since 80-90% of these falls are unwitnessed, having the ability to review a fall by watching a video of the incident is an important building block for any fall huddle program.

OF FALLS OCCUR IN A RESIDENT'S BEDROOM

Most fall detection options, such as wearable detection devices, optical sensors and bed alarms, only alert staff after a fall happens, but they do not provide the much-needed insights gained by capturing the actual fall on video.

SafelyYou takes a different approach by installing AI-enabled camera technology in memory care communities to uncover exactly why residents are falling. The technology detects a fall by analyzing the video feed from cameras placed in a resident's room, stores video only when a fall is detected and sends alerts when a fall occurs.

Video of the fall is available immediately to care staff through a secure web platform, which also can be used to support conversations with the family as well as Emergency Medical Services about the need for an ER visit. A fall assessment is performed by SafelyYou to support root cause analysis and shared with the care team.

AI-ENABLED CAMERAS FOR VIDEO REVIEW OF FALLS

Cameras installed in rooms

Real-time fall detection via artificial intelligence

Human review with personalized recommendations

94% fall detection accuracy compared to 57% wearable device

"**Our technology provides the real-time detection that care staff need to quickly respond to residents, assess the situation and ultimately help a resident,** said Shirley Nickels, chief operating officer for SafelyYou. "**A video of the fall is immediately available to review, so care staff can determine if a resident actually fell or simply lowered themselves to the ground with little risk.**"

3. STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FALL HUDDLES

Unfortunately, many residents fall in their bedroom while they are alone. SafelyYou's AI technology sends a fall alert to the care staff, who provide assistance and care for the resident; however, the treatment should not stop there.

To get to the root cause of the fall and take the necessary measures to reduce the occurrence of a repeat fall, the care staff should meet for a fall huddle within one hour after a fall takes place. The following is a detailed guide on how to conduct a successful fall huddle and reduce the risk of another fall:

REVIEW INCIDENT DOCUMENTATION

- Last known activity
- Time of last wellness check
- Intrinsic/extrinsic factors
- Injury details
- Medical condition (Diagnosis + Mobility)
- Photo of the fall scene for team review
- Prior fall history

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FALL SCENE INVESTIGATION

- Where is the mobility aid?
- What is the position of the bed?
- What is the resident wearing?
- Environmental triggers?
- Is the furniture hazardous?
- Was the door propped open?

During this important step, it is important to train direct care staff to perform a brief fall huddle at the scene.

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DETERMINE ROOT CAUSE

- Assess the environment or equipment related to the fall
- Review current medication and timing
- Interview notes from care staff communication
- Were prior fall prevention/risk interventions in place?
- Review if care plan is appropriate, recently updated and followed

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30 **FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

Contributing Factor	Action Item	Due Date	Responsible Party
Resident appeared dizzy upon standing	Assess BP meds	8 / 2 / 20	Nursing
Toilet transfer was performed incorrectly	Caregiver training needed	8 / 5 / 20	Occupational Therapist
Shoes slipped off	Request appropriate footwear from family	8 / 2 / 20	Fall Champion
Wheelchair break loose	Repair chair	8 / 3 / 20	Maintenance

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4. SUCCESS STORY: FALL HUDDLE IN ACTION

An effective fall huddle program helps care staff understand why a fall happened, so they can take measures to mitigate risks for a future fall. There are many success stories, and the following example truly illustrates the value of a program.

72-year-old male with **Parkinson's** and **Lewy Body Dementia**

He was admitted to a community in 2018 because he had 12 falls in 60 days. He is weak, has gait instability and exhibits impulsive behavior. He will not use his call light to ask for help, but he does need assistance with a walker and activities of daily living (ADLs). One morning, he was sitting in a recliner during wellness a check at 10 a.m. After the check, he tried to pick something up from the floor, fell out his chair and had an abrasion to left knee.

The care staff met for a fall huddle after the incident and followed best practices for the meeting:

- Assessed the environment or equipment related to the fall
- Evaluated current medication and timing
- Reviewed interview notes from care staff and any communication with the resident
- Determined if prior fall prevention/risk interventions were in place
- Reviewed care plan to ensure it was appropriate, updated and followed correctly

This assessment uncovered **environmental** and **care plan issues** that needed to be addressed to reduce the chances of a repeat fall:

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: Determine ability to safely transfer in/out of recliner; ensure accessibility to commonly used items when alone; review appropriate placement of walker when in bed and chair to encourage use; review evening activity opportunities.

CARE PLANNING: Review need of anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications, such as deprescribing any unnecessary medications, and reviewing timing of Parkinson's medications. Check blood pressure three times per day for three days.

5. EFFECTIVE FALL HUDDLE PROGRAMS

The following elements will help you get a fall huddle program up and running:

Establish the framework and fall documentation requirements

Create a multi-disciplinary fall huddle team and define everyone's role

Implement quality controls and accountability to ensure action items are completed

"**Everyone on your team must play a role in the fall huddle program,**" added Nickels. "**It fosters collaboration, makes your team stronger and gives them a road map to make decisions. And having a strong fall prevention program can easily be the deciding factor for a family member who is choosing a community for their loved one.**"

Would you like support reducing falls and ER visits for your residents in memory care?

Email info@safely-you.com to get in touch today.

450 Townsend Street | San Francisco, CA 94107
www.safely-you.com | 415.579.3630

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