

Collaborative Care Series

Building Trust: Family & Staff Communication In The First 14-Days



serenity

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Building Trust: Family & Staff Communication In The First 14-Days

Third Edition

Created in part with Mavericks of Senior Living Communication Collaboration Circle
www.mavericksofseiorliving.com

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This Communication Overview Plan was a collaborative creation by the Mavericks of Senior Living Collaboration Circle.

Thank you to the collaborators for their perspective, creativity, and desire to make positive change in the lives of older adults.

The team at Serenity Engage then added the research-based daily information you see in this booklet.

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Why this booklet?

Long-term care is undergoing a massive generational and digital transformation that began pre-COVID-19, and has now been accelerated.

Three key motivators are:

- reduced census (now exacerbated by fear of COVID-19);¹⁰
- increased lawsuits against long-term care providers, a majority of which are related to the first 14-days after move-in; and
- increased family caregiver involvement, and stress.²

The answers lie in collaborative care with communication and trusted partnerships.

The results⁹ of intentional, trusted relationships between care staff and family are EXTRAORDINARY!

RESIDENT

- physical and emotional healing
- optimal well-being
- sustainment of quality of life

FAMILY

- improved satisfaction with facility
- greater well-being
- increased likelihood to recommend facility

CARE STAFF

- enhanced job satisfaction
- decreased turnover
- truly feeling like part of a team effort

ORGANIZATION

- increased census
- reduced legal actions
- improved state surveys & public reputation
- better resident quality of life

Care. Love. Trust.

The care and love shown to my parents by senior living staff buoyed me many times in their last years.

The staff and I had an unspoken bond built on trust. I have come to believe that trust is the currency of senior care.

Too often, it is unknowingly undermined by simple communication gaps.

We have created a new experience that illuminates the extraordinary care your team provides. Our clients see significant results in lower costs, less risk, happier families, higher retention, and improved quality of care.

Let's join together and evolve the senior care system that benefits so many.

Katherine Wells

Katherine Wells
Founder & CEO
Serenity Engage



14 Day Move-In Communication Plan

Day 1	<p>Move-In Day</p>  <p>Exec. Dir. Intro</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Brief Evening Photo</p>	Day 7	<p>Family Wellness Check-In</p> 
Day 2	<p>Brief Morning Photo and Update</p> 	Day 6	<p>Brief Morning Photo and Introduction</p> 
Day 3	<p>Photo Update Staff Intro</p> 	Day 5	<p>Photo and Update</p> 
Day 4	<p>Visit</p> 	Day 4	<p>Visit</p> 
Day 5	<p>Photo Update</p> 	Day 3	<p>Photo Update</p> 
Day 6	<p>Staff Intro</p> 	Day 2	<p>Staff Intro</p> 
Day 7	<p>Visit</p> 	Day 1	<p>Visit</p> 
Day 8	<p>Photo & Ask about Resident</p> 	Day 11	<p>Photo & Ask about Resident</p> 
Day 9	<p>Photo and Update</p> 	Day 12	<p>Creative Engagement</p> 
Day 10	<p>Reflection</p> 	Day 13	<p>Reflection</p> 
Day 11	<p>Family Wellness Check-In</p> 	Day 14	<p>Family Wellness Check-In</p> 

Day 1



Move-in day is filled with complex emotions. This day marks the start of a new normal; the day everything has changed for the older adult and their family. The first 14-days of care often dictate the family perception of the community, the quality of care, and the relationship between family and the care team.



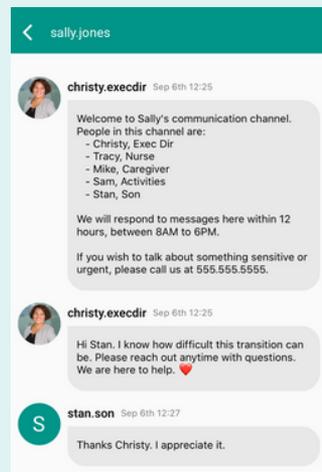
What family may be thinking:

- I hope I'm doing the right thing
- I hope I chose the right place
- I hope mom makes friends
- I hope the caregivers are good
- I hope she sleeps well tonight
- I am so overwhelmed

Two ways you can help

- 1.** Remind family who to contact with initial questions, and encourage them to reach out.

This gives the family a sense of peace that they have a direct connection with the person in charge.



Day 1

Send A Quick Evening Update

M

mike.caregiver Sep 6th 12:51

Hi Stan! Your mom is delightful! She had a good dinner and made friends with one of our other residents. Thought you might like to see her tonight.

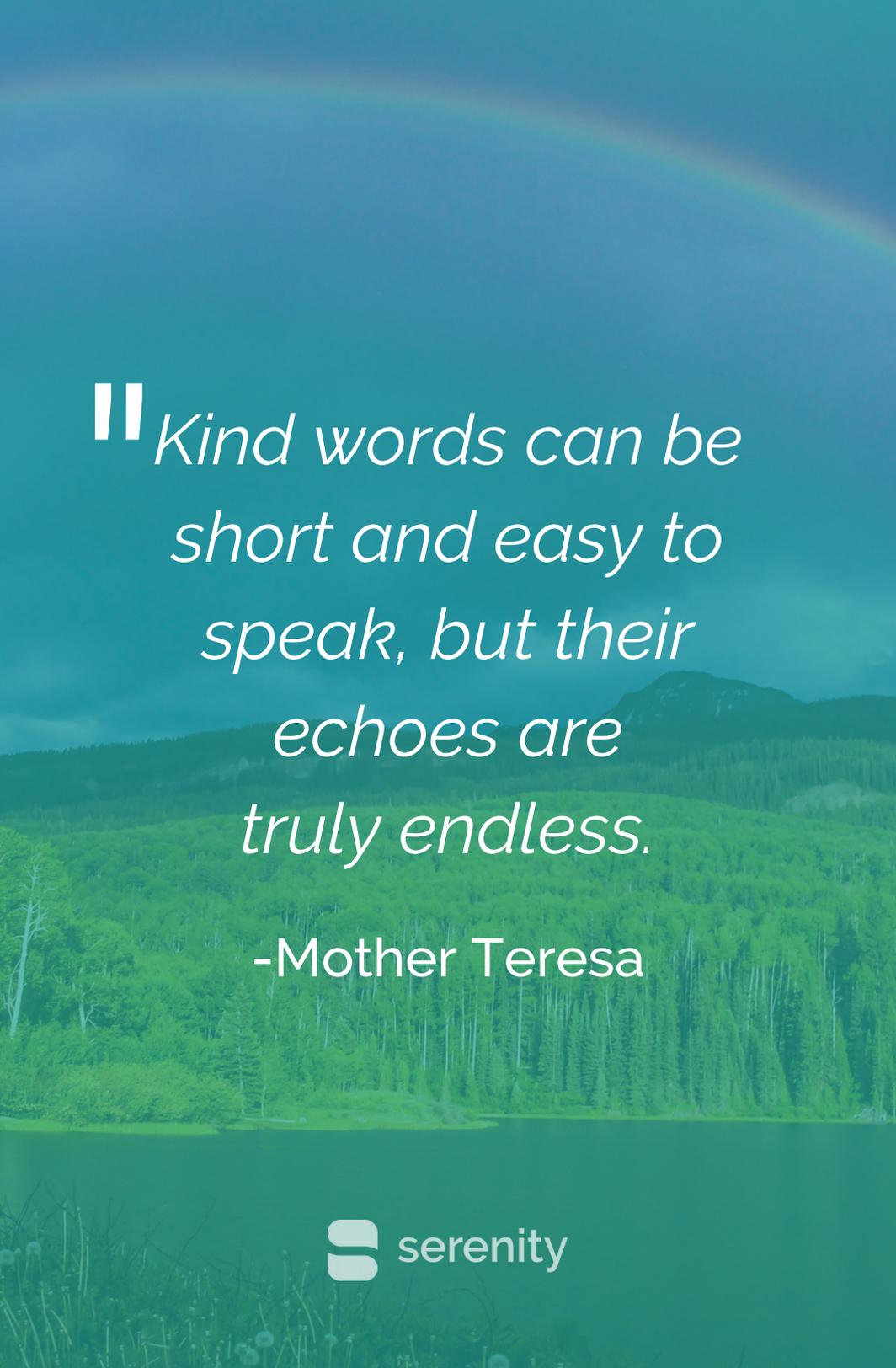


2. Send a quick photo and update that evening to help the family members feel a sense of peace, and a little more at ease with their decision.

Jot down some ideas of things your care team can share on the first day:

MYTH: Family is relieved to move mom into 24-hour care.

REALITY: "While relocation alleviates many issues for the family caregiver, it does not consequently reduce their stress. [It] often continues, and may even worsen."¹



“Kind words can be
short and easy to
speak, but their
echoes are
truly endless.

-Mother Teresa

Day 2



Today is the first day that the resident wakes up in a new home. This can be anxiety-producing for both the resident and the family. It is the first opportunity for you to really showcase the care that you and your team provide.



What family may be thinking:

- I wonder how dad did last night
- I bet he's lonely and scared
- I hate that we had to do this
- I hope he makes a friend today
- I hope they get him involved in something to do

Be proactive

Proactively let family know how dad slept, and that he's up and ate breakfast.

Then ask them a question about their dad. This shows that you want to get to know your new resident better, and engages the family in the conversation.

M **mike.caregiver** Sep 6th 14:00

Hi Genie! Your dad slept well, had a great breakfast this morning. He joined in the morning stretches and we are now painting outside in the garden. He seems to know a lot about birds. Is that something he enjoys?

A man wearing a cap and a jacket is painting on an easel outdoors. There are paintbrushes and a palette nearby.

genie.daughter Sep 6th 14:02

Oh that's awesome! Thank you for letting me know this. 🙌 It makes me feel so much better!

Yes, he was a bird watching fanatic! Ask him about the birds who would land on our fingers!

Day 2

MYTH: Family will call when they want an update.

REALITY: Four out of 10 families state they won't call because they don't want to add burden to an already overworked staff.² Others reported that their phone calls often went to voicemail or to someone who didn't know what had been happening with their loved one.

What might your team say to begin to show the family that their loved one is in good hands?



Tracie Corner
Family Member

"My mom relies on me. I moved her out of the first facility partly because they promised they would provide me with updates on how she was doing. But I almost never received them. The whole concept of 'we'll keep you posted' was broken!"

Proactive communication grows trust.

*“The best thing
about the future is
that it comes one
day at a time.*

-Abraham Lincoln

Day 3



Our Activities calendars are filled with a variety of engaging, interesting, and entertaining options. The calendar is often published on the website, and a printed copy is generally available. Upon move-in, a copy is almost always given to the family to show the wide variety of fun from which to select.



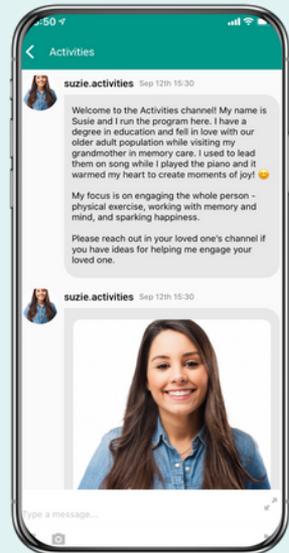
What family may be thinking:

- What did mom do today?
- I hope she didn't just watch TV all day.
- Did she get outside?
- Did they go for a walk?
- How will she keep her mind active?

Introduce the Activities Director

Let the family get to know who engages their loved one in activities and describe some of the things they do.

Bonus points if you have them share how they got into senior care and why!



An individualized, well thought out activities program is at the heart of a quality life for residents.³

Day 3



suzie.activities Sep 12th 16:00

Today we painted a door with geometric shapes. Everyone had a lot of fun!



Show, don't tell

Family members often have full-time jobs, kids at home, relationships to maintain, and busy lives.

This does NOT mean they don't care about mom. It DOES mean they will appreciate you even more if you show them what mom did today!

Example: "Hi, I'm Alice and I run the activities program. I taught elementary school for 20 years. When my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, I saw that my educational background was helpful for keeping his mind, body, and spirit active. I love what I do! 😊"

What is unique about your activities program and why?

“ *There are
no traffic jams
along the
extra mile.*

-Roger Staubach

Day 4



This is a great time to help the resident speak with or see their loved ones. Whether it's by phone, in-person or video conferencing, it will go a long way if you help orchestrate a visit of some type. At this point, the resident is likely to be missing their family, and is beginning to realize that their life has dramatically changed.

What family may be thinking:



- I wonder if mom is feeling settled in.
- I'd really like to see her, but I can't get there until this weekend.
- Is she eating okay?
- Has she made any friends?

Organize a visit

Connectedness is an essential human need. Studies show that a feeling of connectedness reduces stress and pain, and increases overall well-being. Creating an opportunity for the resident to feel connected to their family serves both!



Day 4

Or send a video...

If a visit can't be orchestrated, family will appreciate seeing a short video clip of mom or dad. Consider a clip of them during an activity or out in the garden.

Ask the family to respond with a quick video to say hello!



Studies¹¹ show benefits associated with elders who report stronger ties with family include:

- Longer life
- Stronger immune system
- Improved mental health
- Higher level of cognitive function

What other creative ways can you help keep your resident feeling connected to their family?

“*To know even one
life has breathed
easier because you
lived. That is to
have succeeded.*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



Making acquaintances and friends helps residents add meaning to their lives by sharing each others stories and creating new ones together. Aiding in creating these connections gives each individual a new opportunity to be 'seen,' and to become well-known to each other. It enhances the feeling of community, with all the benefits that brings.

What family may be thinking:



- Is dad participating in activities?
- Did he join the poker group?
- Is he lonely?
- How can I help him become more socially active?

Show family that dad is making friends

When family sees dad smiling and enjoying social interactions, they have confidence that dad is not just sitting in his room all day.

It is important to see that dad's life continues to have meaning and connectedness with others.



Day 5

MYTH: Activities means our loved one won't be isolated.

REALITY: Research⁴ shows that upon moving into long-term care:

- 25% of residents have decreased socialization with family
- 20% had decreased socialization with friends
- 19% had levels of decrease in companionship
- 21% felt more left out
- 14% felt more isolated



What connection between residents
can you help make today?



"The opposite of growth is death - physical and spiritual. Individuals living with frailty continue to grow and teach us how to be human beings in a caring community. Everyone has the potential to be a 'growth partner' to someone else."

~ The Eden Alternative Domains of Well-Being⁵

“Well-being is a much larger idea than either quality of life or customer satisfaction. It is based on a holistic understanding of human needs and capacities. Well-being is elusive, highly subjective, and the most valuable of all human possessions.

-Dr. Bill Thomas,
What Are Old People For?



It's been nearly a week, and tomorrow will be a check-in phone call. Today, try to give family members a smile and a warm heart by sharing a positive, upbeat update along with a picture. Let them see your extraordinary care by introducing another staff member who interacts regularly with their loved one.

What family may be thinking:



- I look forward to hearing how my wife's first week was
- I sure miss her
- Did she feel safe and secure?
- Were the caregivers good to her?

Share a Morning Photo

A quick update of the morning will illuminate the care your team gives each and every day. Whether it's eating breakfast or going for a morning walk, family will enjoy knowing that their loved one is content and well cared-for.



Day 6

Hi! My name is Mark and I'm part of your dad's care team here. He & I love to walk outside and have spirited conversations about politics. He's a brilliant man and I really enjoy the way he thinks.



Introduce A Care Team Member

The family has met the Executive Director and the Activities Director. Now introduce one of your extraordinary caregivers. Help them share a bit about themselves and what they enjoy about their loved one.

Not only does this build trust with family, but it builds trust with your staff.

One study showed that "companies that evolve to a high level of confidence increased employee-generated revenue by \$10,000 per year."⁶



What would help boost trust in your work environment?

“ Nothing is as fast as the speed of trust. Nothing is as fulfilling as a relationship of trust. Nothing is as inspiring as an offering of trust. Nothing is as profitable as the economics of trust. Nothing has more influence than a reputation of trust.

- Dr. Stephen Covey

Day 7



It's been one week since the resident has moved into your care. You've shared their journey in updates and photos, you've created the beginning of a connection between family and care staff, and today is the day to check in with the family to hear how they are feeling about the care you are providing.

What family may be thinking:



- We all got through the first week
- I want to be sure they remember that mom is lactose intolerant
- I wonder how she's doing at night and if she's sleeping well

How to have a great family check-in: Ask. Listen. Share. Collaborate.

- 1.** First, ASK. Invite family to tell you what they feel is going well, and what they'd like to see improved. This is all about them. Let them share as much or as little as they'd like.
- 2.** Apply ACTIVE LISTENING so they know you are really getting what they are saying. They may need to get some emotions out. Create some space for them to do so. Remember, they are going through a grieving process for the loss of 'the way things used to be.'

Day 7

3. **SHARE** a summary of what you've seen over the week. Always start and end with positives such as, "Your mom is making friends and seems to be feeling much more comfortable here." Discuss your concerns, if any, and then share another positive.
4. **COLLABORATE** on the go-forward plan. Talk about what everyone wants to see more of, and what improvements can be made. Schedule the next family check-in meeting for a week out. Follow up with a summary of today's discussion and outline the plan between now and the next meeting.

"Transparency is often talked about in senior care, and rarely practiced. The industry has evolved to be so highly regulated and controlled on the inside that families are often left out in the cold. We are dedicated to transparency in communications, and Serenity Engage has allowed us to magnify that tenfold."
~ Francis LeGasse, CEO, Assured Assisted Living



What has gone well this week? What do you think can improve?

*“No matter what
people tell you,
words and ideas
can change the
world.”*

- Robin Williams

Day 8



This is the start of the second week in your care. It would be easy to assume that the family is comfortable with the care and all is well. While that may be true, it is still important to continue conversation and build trust.

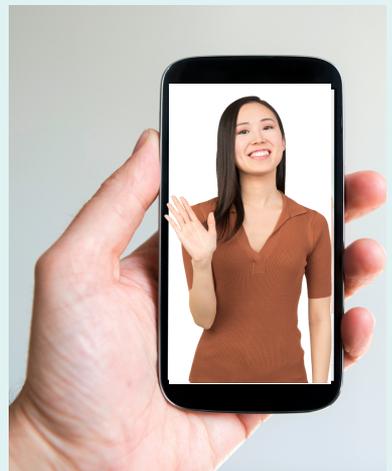


We are still
at the
beginning of
our journey
together.

Make it easy for family to have a quick video chat with their loved one today.

"While media attention has focused on video calling platforms to help families stay in touch during the pandemic, only 8.8% of [residents] could manage these types of communications.²"

This may require extra time and effort for your staff, but it goes a long way in building a trusting relationship with the family.



Day 9



MYTH: Family knows who to contact. And, also, they can always call the main number.

REALITY: Family is overwhelmed with information and emotions when they first transition dad into senior living. Build trust by introducing another key member of their dad's care team.

For example, introduce your chef and allow him or her to share why they love what they do and their particular focus on nutrition for the brain and the body.



Who can you introduce that gives a broader sense of your community?

Day 10

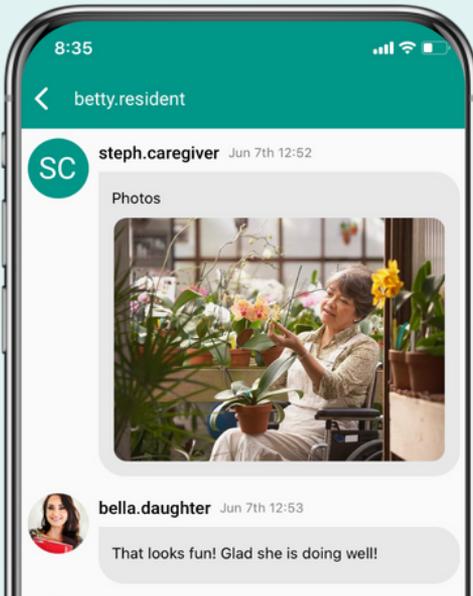


What can you catch mom doing today that will bring a moment of joy to the family? Did she pick a flower in the garden, or smile when you made a silly joke? Did she enjoy lunch with a new friend, or get excited watching an old TV show?

A large, 3D-rendered red number '50%' with a percentage sign, set against a white background with a soft shadow.

Research shows that only half of families think they are getting the right amount of information about their loved one.²

How to turn that failing grade into an A+



Families aren't looking for a dissertation on their loved one. They want simple, quick updates including:

- a story or anecdote about their mom
- how mom is spending her time
- how mom's mood is in general



"I wish the community had gotten to know my dad better. I spent hours filling out the intake form with his likes and dislikes, and I feel like it went into a computer and no one ever looked at it again."
~ Family Member

What can you learn about those in your care today?

"Everyone says they provide person-centered care, but what does that really mean? What if we focus on ensuring purpose for each individual instead? We can only deliver that by truly getting to know those in our care."

Francis LeGasse, CEO,
Assured Assisted Living and Sevens Home Care





Get creative with your conversations! Think about the elder's personality and use that in a family photo update. Below are some ideas from real Serenity Engage users.

- "One time the staff took a series of pictures of mom blowing me a kiss. It made me tear up with happiness!" (See below)
- "My mom loves Scrabble so sometimes she spells out a message for me on the Scrabble board and they send me a photo!"
- "I live in another state and couldn't be there for dad's birthday. The staff had him write a message to me on his cake, and sent me a pic of him with the cake waving at me. I treasure that image."

Share special moments! (Like blowing kisses.)



*Photos by permission of Nancy Morr and Applewood Our House.



Take a moment to reflect on the last two weeks.



One study⁸ showed that when care plans were jointly developed by nurses and family, "medications were more likely to be reduced for the resident." The findings highlight the potential of family-staff interventions to facilitate communication."

What worked well?



What could be improved?

This will help you prepare for a productive family well-being check-in meeting tomorrow. Remember to:

- ASK questions
- LISTEN actively
- SHARE transparently
- COLLABORATE as a team

Day 14



As we wrap up the first two weeks of this transition, we take the time to meet for another check-in with the family. We have worked together as a complete care team, and laid a strong foundation on which to build.



Remember:
We are still at
the beginning
of our journey
together.

This is a great time to co-create a care plan based trust, and continue the conversation to build a partnership.



What next?



When you make regular deposits into the emotional bank accounts of your resident's family members, it pays dividends for EVERYONE involved.

Let's summarize some of the key highlights from the research and this booklet:

- The majority of lawsuits in senior living are related to communication (or lack thereof) in the first 14-days after move-in.
- The extra few minutes spent each day during this time creates a trusted relationship that saves time and pays on-going dividends for the care team, the resident, their family, and your bottom line.
- By creating an open conversation with your care team and family, the family is continually reminded why they made the right choice.

Life is change.
Growth is optional.
Choose wisely.

- Karen Kaiser Clark

Research

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About Serenity Engage

Serenity Engage is an award-winning HIPAA-compliant platform connecting older adults, their providers, and family care partners to create trusted relationships.

Adopted by memory care, assisted living, skilled nursing, hospice and home health organizations across the nation, Serenity Engage:

- builds trust
- saves staff 3-5 hours/week
- boosts census by 15%
- increases staff job satisfaction
- reduces risk and litigation
- improves quality of life for those in your care



"Alexa, what's for dinner?"



The industry
is changing.
Are you?

Get a demo today!



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