

CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist Instructions

Relationships between team members and residents in long-term care can have a big impact on how a resident experiences mealtimes. The atmosphere and physical aspects of the dining room can also play a large part in creating a relaxing and enjoyable dining experience. CHOICE+ is an innovative program that looks to improve the mealtime experience by focusing on relationship-centred practices and the dining environment. CHOICE+ is made up of 6 principles that should happen at mealtimes:

Connecting – meaningful conversations and socializing

Honouring Dignity – respecting decisions, choices, and preferences

Offering Support – supporting residents based on individual needs

Identify – knowing and accepting residents as unique individuals

Creating Opportunities – supporting active mealtime participation

Enjoyment – creating a calm and welcoming dining environment

What is the CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist?

The CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist (DRC) was created as part of the CHOICE+ program to help team members in long-term care create a comfortable, inviting and enjoyable dining environment. It helps team members reflect on the physical aspects and ambiance of the dining room in which they work, and offers some tips and suggestions to make improvements.

Who should use DRC?

DRC was designed for team members in long-term care (e.g., dietary team members, recreation team members, personal support workers, registered practical nurses, leadership) – essentially any team members that support the dining room.

How to complete DRC:

On DRC, there are 4 categories (layout, furniture, lighting/sound, and ambiance) each with 5-6 questions about the dining environment. Team members can complete the entire DRC in one sitting, over a set period of time (e.g., 1 week), or focus in on one category at a time (e.g., 1 category/week). Team members should read the questions, reflect on the dining room being assessed or where they most commonly work, and answer 'yes' or 'no'.

Don't worry if there are a number of 'No's', these questions were designed with the ideal dining room being the goal.

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How to use DRC to make goals

Once team members have completed DRC, it is important to discuss the exercise as a team. Consider setting a specific meeting time to discuss DRC results or plan to talk about it at an existing meeting, like a huddle or shift change. Ask team members who are comfortable to share their results. For example, what category had the most 'No' responses. Or, if they see any opportunity areas for improvement based on their responses or the tips that are provided. As a team, pick a few opportunity areas and discuss how the team can start working towards them. Together, make a plan and set goals, discuss who needs to be involved and how the team will know when the goal is reached. Neighbourhood teams are encouraged to problem-solve together and find creative solutions that meet the needs of residents. Keeping home management informed on plans and progress is also important as they can provide helpful support. And don't forget to celebrate successes – big or small!

How often should DRC be used?

DRC can be completed as needed, perhaps when a team has decided to make changes to the dining room or when there is a need to refocus on resident mealtime experiences. Completing the checklist more frequently will help to keep dining room goals in mind and make self-reflection a regular exercise.

Please note: DRC is meant to help team members in long-term care reflect on the dining environment and start making goals and action plans to make dining rooms more comfortable and enjoyable. DRC is not an objective measure, but is to be used as a guide and a place to start conversations about improving the dining environment for residents in long-term care.