



Policy Name INQUIRIES REGARDING DECEASED RESIDENTS FROM FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND OTHER VISITORS	Policy Number: 0113a
	Effective Date: May 9, 1996
Approved By: Management Committee	Date Revised: April 17, 2012
Classification: Delivery of Care to Residents and Families	Page No: Page 1 of 2

POLICY

The Health Professions Act specifies that health care workers cannot give any personal information about a Resident to anyone except immediate family/next of kin or a health advocate. This Act includes inquiries regarding a deceased Resident at Agapé Hospice.

PROCEDURE

1. If an inquiry (phone or on-site visitor) is received about a Resident who has died, the staff member needs to first confirm if the caller/visitor is immediate family/next of kin or the health advocate. The genogram in the health record may be used for clarification. Staff who is not comfortable with speaking with the inquirer, may direct the call to a Register Nurse (RN).
2. If the caller/visitor is immediate family/next of kin or the health advocate, then the RN may reveal as gently as possible that the Resident is deceased.
3. Any other callers/visitors need to be directed to the family/next of kin or the health advocate without revealing that the Resident has died. Staff may use the following responses as guidelines to these inquiries:

“I’m sorry, (Resident) is no longer in our building. Please contact the family for any further information.”

“We are unable to give out any information except to immediate family. Please contact them for any further information.”

Staff should give support to a visitor learning that a Resident is not here.

****UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE STAFF MEMBER GIVE A CALLER/VISITOR THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF BEREAVED FAMILY MEMBERS.****



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4. From time to time, other Residents and/or family members in Agapé inquire – after seeing a rainbow on the door – regarding that particular Resident. Such inquiries can be handled as follows:

“A rainbow on any door at Agapé means someone has passed. How do you feel when you see a rainbow?” (This will allow a dialogue to occur to explore that specific individual’s feeling and provide a way staff can help support that individual.)

****NO SPECIFICS AS TO THAT DECEASED RESIDENT CAN BE GIVEN OUT.****

5. In the specific case of Residents who have no immediate family or family members in the city:

At the time of admission, Social Work or nursing staff will clarify with the Resident or their health advocate as to what directions should be followed after death when friends inquire about that Resident. These directions and consent from the Resident or health advocate must be charted in the Resident’s chart (Progress Notes) so that all staff can be aware.

6. At the time of admission all Residents and families may be told about the rainbow symbol and what it means (this will be added to the Resident information booklet handed out at the time of admission). The Resident and family have the right to request that a rainbow is not used at the time of death because of privacy. If such a request is made, this information needs to be on the white report board and in the Resident’s care plan.

CROSS REFERENCE

[Policy 0113b: Inquiries Regarding Past/Present Residents From Professional Agencies](#)

REFERENCE

The Health Information Act at a Glance for Custodians