

Creating and Nurturing



National Skilled Nursing Care Week • May 8-14, 2022

## PLANNING GUIDE

#NSNCW

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Skilled nursing care centers and their staff provide an incredible and steadfast commitment to ensuring quality care and quality of life for their residents.

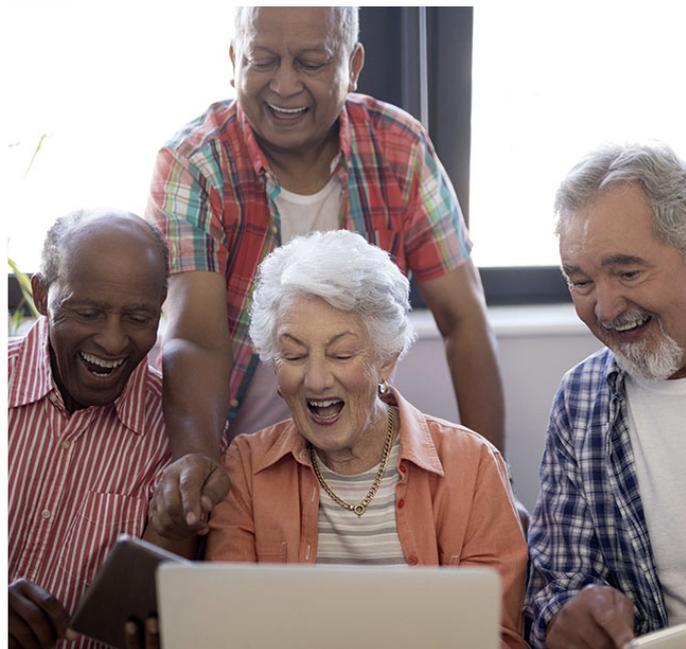
This has never been more evident than the last two years since the pandemic began. In addition to protecting and caring for residents around the clock during a time of limited visitation and social distancing, staff stepped in as family members and friends to ensure that residents had the essential social connections they needed.

This year's National Skilled Nursing Care Week® (NSNCW) theme, *Creating and Nurturing Connections*, celebrates the essential role that skilled nursing care centers and staff play in creating and nurturing connections for their residents.

## Creating and Nurturing



Established by the American Health Care Association (AHCA) in 1967, NSNCW, formerly known as National Nursing Home Week, recognizes the essential role of skilled nursing care centers in caring for America's frail, elderly, and disabled.





## ACTIVITY IDEAS

The following general activities are ideas designed to help celebrate the important role of skilled nursing care centers. We encourage staff from all departments to consider pairing up with residents and their families to form new connections or nurture existing ones. Please be sure to plan your activities through an infection prevention and control lens and modify them based on the latest guidelines as needed.

### Creating and Nurturing Connections with Art and Music.

Experiencing and creating all types of art can be transformative — and makes for a powerful, accessible way to connect with people. Pair a resident and staff member together to create art. Work together to identify the project and share what was created (e.g., music performance, painting, crafting, etc.) at a show-and-tell and in the process, get to know one another.



### Creating and Nurturing Connections by Learning a New Skill or Activity.

Research suggests that people are more likely to achieve their goals if they share their struggles and successes with an accountability partner. Pair a resident and staff member together to learn something new! Share this new accomplishment, skill, or hobby at a show-and-tell event.



### Creating and Nurturing Connections with Nature.

It's hard to overstate the remarkable health benefits of nature. Research has shown that spending time surrounded by plants, animals, and fresh air can have an incredible impact on positive health outcomes. Pair a resident and staff member together and go for a relaxing walk, enjoy a picnic or meal outside, garden, or introduce a new houseplant to the resident and help them care for it.



## Creating and Nurturing Connections by Playing Games.

Studies have shown that older adults who regularly stimulate their brains with active, educational activities — including many types of board games, card games, and puzzles — tend to score much higher on memory and cognition tests. Playing games together can also be a great chance to connect and bond, whether you're chatting over a game of checkers or putting your heads together over a particularly perplexing puzzle. Pair a resident and staff member together to enjoy a fun game and learn more about each other.

## Creating and Nurturing Connections by Cooking and Sharing a Meal Together.

Food is one of the cornerstones of our culture. Sharing a meal is fundamental to the human experience. Mealtimes are for getting nutrients and sustenance — but they're also about having important conversations, sharing memories, and bonding with others. Pair a resident and staff member together to enjoy a meal of choice and learn about each other.

## Creating and Nurturing Connections by Sharing Memories and Telling Stories.

Most people can't wait to share their memories, thoughts, and experiences. One of the best ways to connect with a person may be to simply be present and give them an audience. Be an active listener. Communicate that you are open to talking by getting rid of distractions (such as noises from the TV or radio), making eye contact, and showing support by nodding your head or gently asking clarifying questions. Pair a resident and a staff member to do just that. A few ways to get the ball rolling:

- Asking questions about their childhood or early life
- Paging through old photo albums or scrapbooks
- Talking about the interesting or meaningful items you find around their room.



### Share Your Stories

Be sure to **share** the ways your staff, volunteers, residents, and families are creating and nurturing connections at your center by sharing your extraordinary stories with AHCA/NCAL's publication *Provider Magazine* at [storiesofcare@ahca.org](mailto:storiesofcare@ahca.org) for a chance to be featured in "Stories of Care."

# MEDIA TIPS

NSNCW is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the important role of skilled nursing care centers and to let your community know about your center's culture, programs, and services. Share your story with the public, and connect with local media outlets using media alerts, letters to the editor, op-ed pieces, proclamations, and social media posts.

## Media Alerts

Media alerts are used to alert the local media about issues, services, programs, awards, and other significant events. Send the release to your local news editors and reporters, especially those who have previously covered your nursing center.

## Letter to the Editor/Op-Ed Pieces

These short articles provide greater control over the content of your message and are authored by a designated representative of your center (e.g., Executive Director). Share how your center is making a difference in the lives of those you serve or encourage an active resident or a family member to write a letter to the editor about their experience.

## Proclamations

Proclamations are a great mechanism to have your locally elected officials visit your nursing care center. Invite your governor, mayor, or city council members to issue a proclamation in honor of NSNCW and to visit the center.

## Social Media

Social media platforms enable your center to easily share NSNCW photos, videos, and candid moments. Some social media networks cater to visual content, and others are better for text-based sharing. Social platforms like Facebook and Instagram are ideal for promoting your center during NSNCW with text, photos, and videos.

Remember to tag us

**@NationalSkilledNursingCareWeek**

on Facebook and **@ahcancal** on Twitter in any NSNCW-related posts, and use the hashtag, **#NSNCW** on all platforms.

Be sure to also [share](#) your extraordinary stories with AHCA/NCAL's publication *Provider Magazine* at [storiesofcare@ahca.org](mailto:storiesofcare@ahca.org) for a chance to be featured in "Stories of Care."

## BEST PRACTICES FOR PROTECTING PRIVACY

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### Keep in Mind

While technologies such as smartphones and social media platforms have allowed care providers, as well as residents themselves, to enhance quality of life, they have also unfortunately proven to be a set of tools used by offenders to violate the privacy and dignity of vulnerable residents. To help prevent these actions, skilled nursing care centers must remain vigilant and ensure policies and procedures are in place. Make sure your center and company are following these best practices from AHCA.

### Policies

AHCA encourages all nursing care centers to have a social media policy that protects not only the residents and patients but also the employees and the care center. The policy should define what employees can or cannot do on social media, and if written correctly, is essentially a "code of conduct" that clearly defines what the center expects from its employees when it comes to online behavior. Existing social media policies should be reviewed and updated frequently. The social media landscape is rapidly changing, with new technologies and tools emerging all the time. It is important to consistently ensure that the social media policy is not only effective but legal.

### Training

Nursing centers should train new employees during orientation and retrain existing employees periodically about its privacy and social media policies (e.g., HIPAA). Training should clearly articulate the center's process for monitoring and/or taking corrective action against individuals who inappropriately use social media. Care centers should prominently post the center's social media policy and procedures for residents, families, and staff.