

Leadership in Challenging Times at ALRs

As assisted living professionals, you live and work in a constant state of preparedness for situations that might threaten the health and safety of your residents and staff. As a past Executive Director in assisted living for eleven plus years, I am familiar with the many ways in which we prepare throughout the year for severe weather, power outages, elopements, fire, and yes, even an outbreak of a serious illness such as flu or the Norovirus. While you likely never imagined this exact scenario playing out in our world, your knowledge, skills, leadership, and commitment will make all the difference for your community. You and your staff have trained for moments like this; you know what must be done. Difficult decisions must be made, but you know that your team is engaged and committed, drawing inspiration from your guidance and direction.

While the world seems to be swirling all around you, you are in a unique position to provide valuable support to residents, their families, and your staff, all of whom are frightened and uncertain about what tomorrow will bring. I encourage you to employ the five “Cs” as you guide your community through the disinfecting, sanitizing, preparing, juggling, shifting gears, ordering of supplies, listening attentively, wiping a tear, and all other challenges associated with the current situation.

Compassion

Courage

Calm

Clarity

Commitment

You may be doubting yourself during moments that no one sees, but I encourage you to push all negative thoughts aside and continue to employ the leadership skills that have brought your team to this point. You have inspired them in your shared vision of health and happiness for your community. Your team has risen to the call; this is not by coincidence. Your example of leading with heart and wisdom has allowed your team and your residents to thrive and live fulfilling lives. The goal is clear and you know what must be done. In these times when we must function with all hands on deck (please make sure they're washed!), your leadership will make it happen. Mass-ALA believes in you, your team believes in you, and now is the time to believe in yourself. You've got what it takes. Let's get this done and get back to the business of embracing new, exciting, and positive challenges in meeting the needs of a rapidly growing older adult population.

I welcome the opportunity to work together as we forge ahead. Please feel free to contact me any time at lcashman@mass-ala.org.

Laurie Cashman, Director of Education