SOP for Communicating with Families

Caregivers

Communication with family members is a vital part of our work. They count on us to keep them informed on what is happening with their loved one(s). We have a team of people who participate in the care of our clients, so keep this in mind when communicating with families.

1. Case managers make weekly calls to clients and/or families. Make sure ALL pertinent details are shared with the case managers and other caregivers in the house and flag important care issues to the Case Managers so that when they speak to families, they can be ready with answers to questions about how we handled anything that has come up.  
   1. Issues which must be shared include, but are not limited to, changes in condition, appointments, new orders, and communication from Home Health, VA, doctors’ offices, and requests from other family members.
2. The case managers will do the same for you by putting a weekly note into Tiger Connect about their conversations with the families. This will include feedback and advice about the ongoing plan of care.
3. Once a week, the Case Managers give report to Administration for each client. This includes information from caregivers and families, and deals with issues that affect the team and the company as a whole.
4. If you have any direct communication with family, you must share that communication with those in the client group, so all involved parties are aware of it. Communication outside of these channels is prohibited unless written exception is provided from Administration. We ask family members to refrain from contacting you directly for questions which should be directed to Administration or scheduling. If a family member asks you something directly, have our phone numbers handy to give to them so they can be redirected to the appropriate person.
5. Communication with a family member outside of the home setting for a client is subject to review and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Remember, you can get yourself into a lot of trouble having conversations with family members who may or may not be authorized to make decisions, or even have access to information legally. A person does not have legal access to protected health information simply because they are a family member. Don't allow yourself to accidentally violate HIPAA because you communicated without our protective systems to cover you.
6. Always make sure your interactions with families, clients, and each other are respectful and kind. Rudeness will not be tolerated at any level of the team. Understand that communicating by text can be easily misunderstood and family members can read negativity into your "tone" the same way anyone else could. That's yet another reason why you should communicate from the client's home only. It's too easy to misread a text and there is nothing to stop a family member from forwarding a text to someone else out of context.