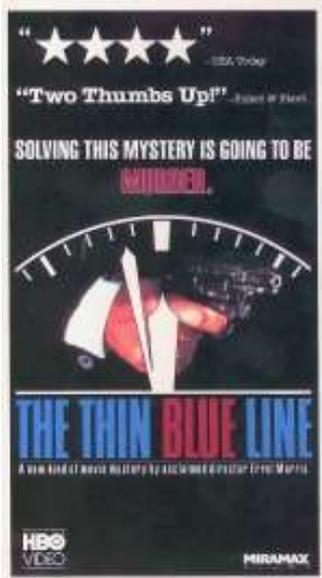




# *Walking the Fine Line*

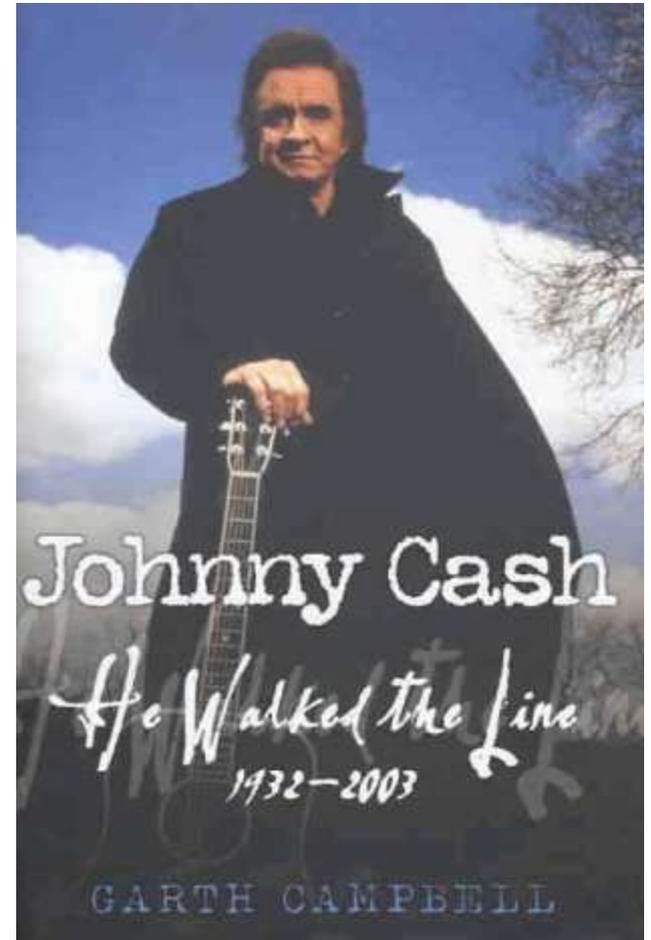
# Thin Blue Lines...





# “I Walk the Line.”

I keep a close watch  
on this heart of mine.  
I keep my eyes wide  
open all the time.  
I keep the ends out for  
the tie that binds  
Because you're mine, I  
walk the line.



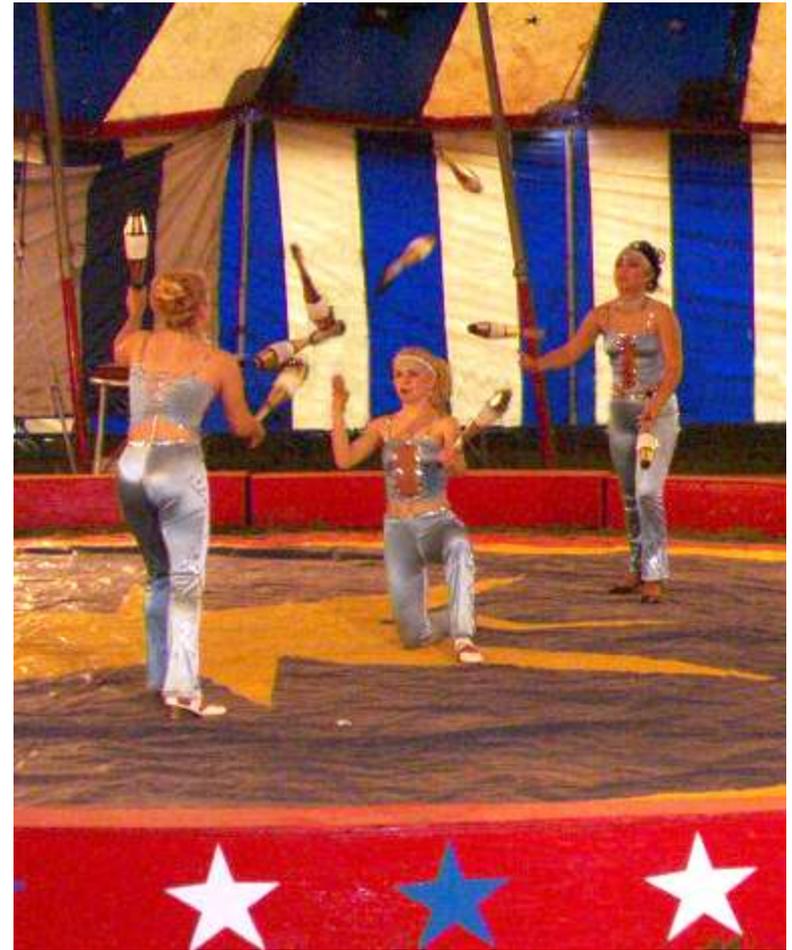
# Walking the Fine Line Between...

## Residents & Staff



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**At times you  
must feel like...**



# THE QUESTION IS:

In my role as ombudsman,  
how do I advocate for  
residents in a way that  
produces a resident-centered  
focus in the facility and a  
win/win situation for all?

# How do I...

- Walk the fine line between residents and staff in a way that increases the level of trust between myself and residents and between myself and staff members?
- Present myself, so that residents understand that I am there to advocate on their behalf?
- Develop a relationship with staff that leads to the desired outcome—an improvement in the quality of life for residents.



It is our challenge not only to talk the talk,  
but to continually walk the walk...

***In other words, everything we expect  
the staff to do, is our duty, as well.***

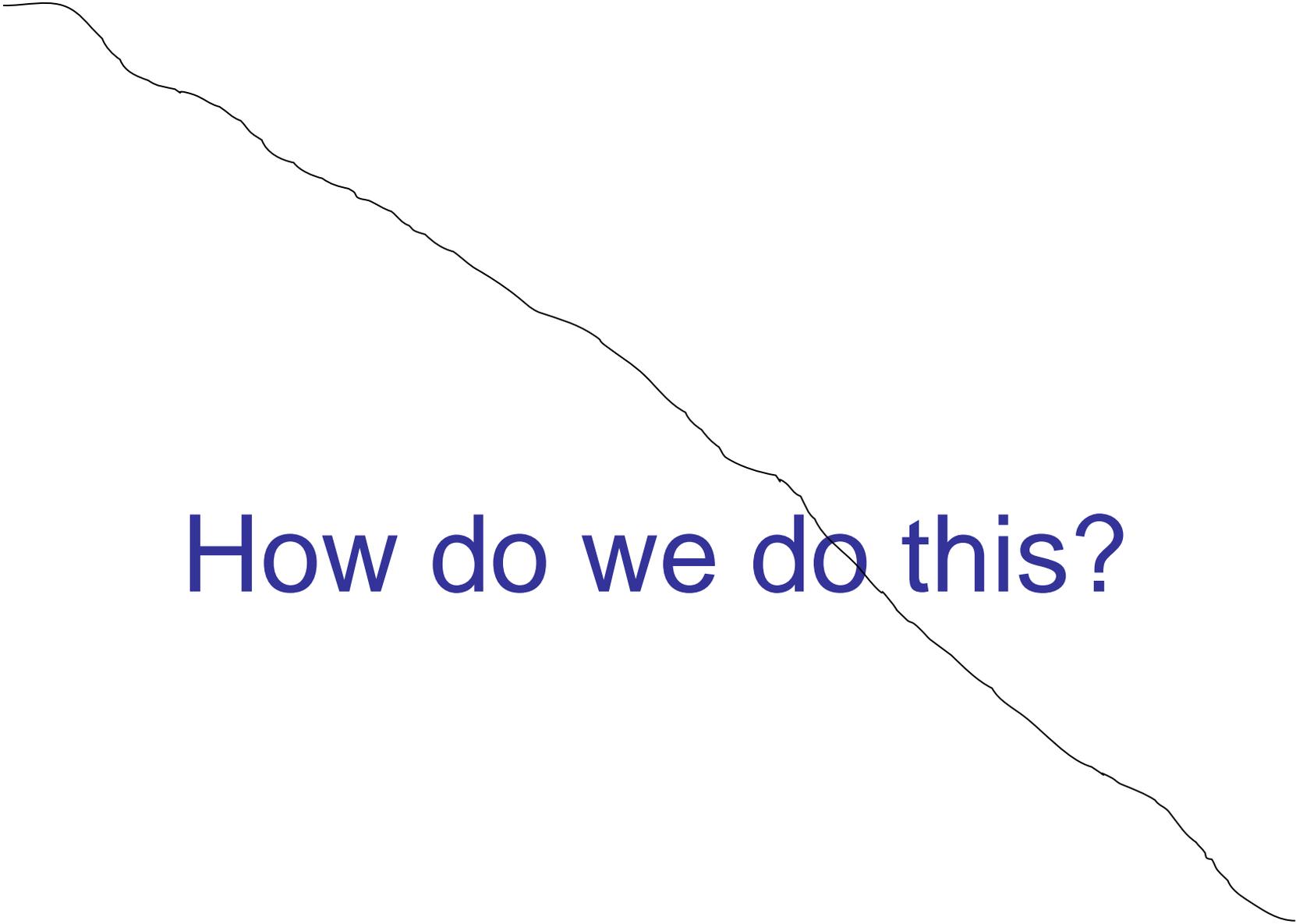
**With *residents*, it is our charge to be:**

- Courteous at all times
- Be a good listener
- Be patient and understanding
- Maintain confidentiality
- Develop a positive relationship

Not only with residents, ***but with staff as well.***

**With *staff*, it is our charge to be:**

- Courteous at all times
- Be a good listener
- Be patient and understanding
- Maintain confidentiality
- Develop a positive relationship



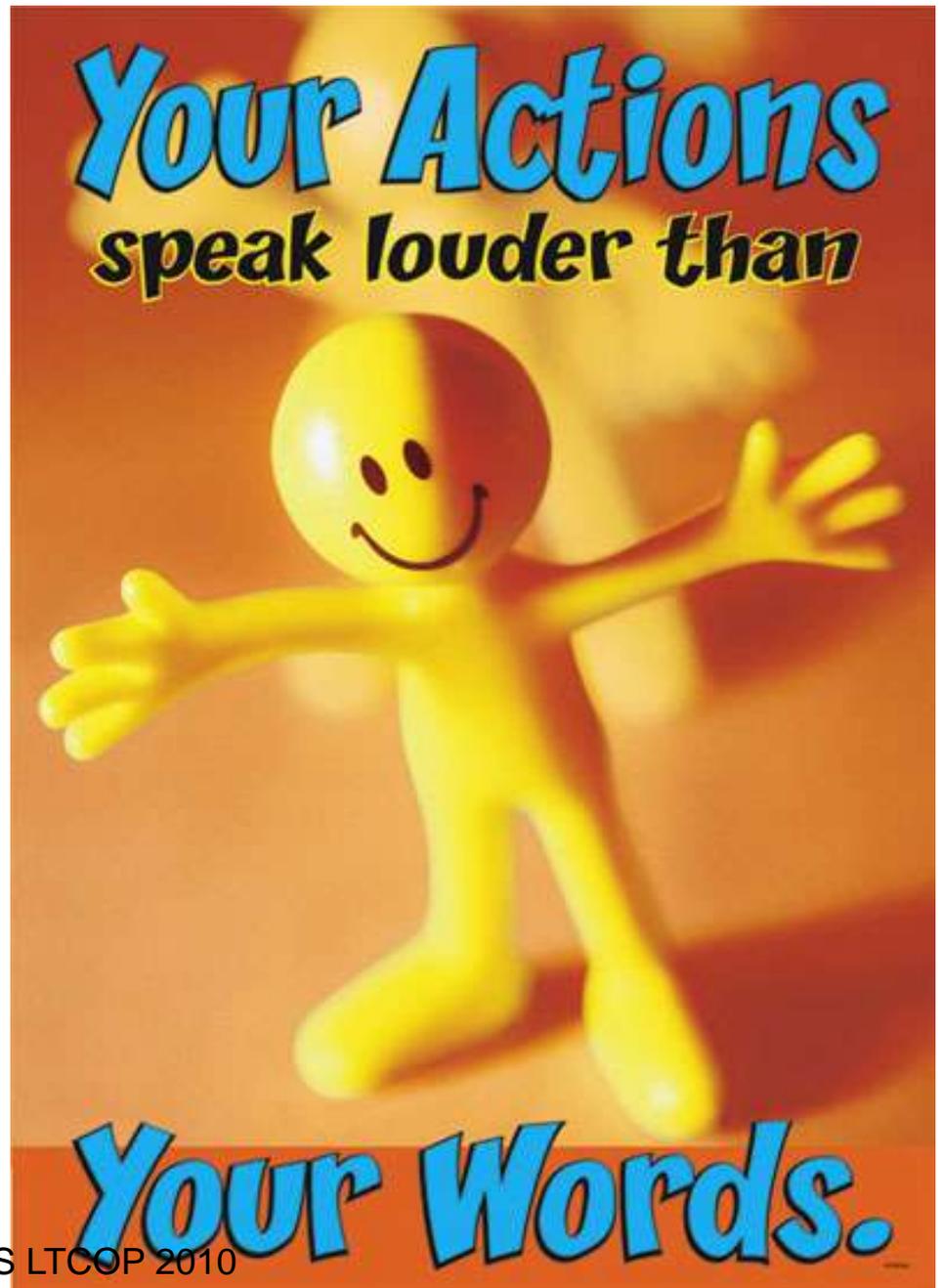
How do we do this?

# By Developing Appropriate Relationships with the...

- Residents & Family Members
- Administrator
- Staff: Department Heads and Direct Care Workers

**BE CAREFUL Not  
To  
Become  
TOO  
PRO-FACILTY**

**They're watching you**



# If you become too PRO-FACILITY, this may diminish...

- Trust in relationships with residents and family members
- Objectivity in identifying problems
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Goals of the ombudsman program

# On the other hand... be careful not to bulldoze your way in.



- This will limit your capacity to achieve results.
- This will put others on the defensive.
- This will create a power struggle.

# Therefore, in finding the right balance...

You must not enter the facility with an “I’m going to get you for something!” attitude.

Yet, at the same time, **don’t become desensitized** to issues that may be present.



# IT'S A FINE LINE TO WALK...

in finding the right balance.



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So... let's look at how to develop appropriate relationships with each:

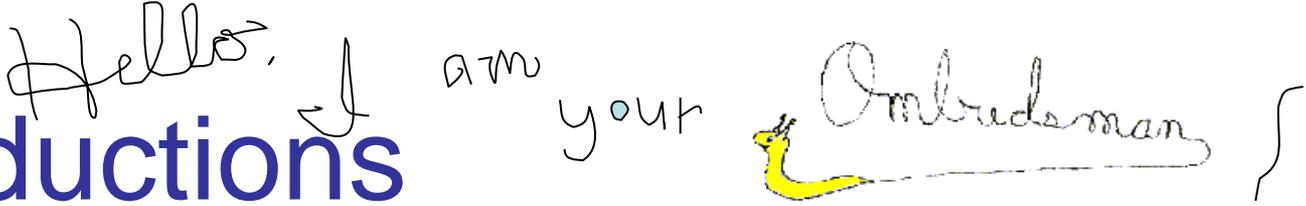
- Residents & Family Members
- Administrator
- Staff: Department Heads and Direct Care Workers

# Developing a Relationship with Residents and Family Members



# 1 - Introductions

*Hello,*  
*I am your*  
*Ombudsman*



- Introduce yourself to every resident and family member.
- Explain your role as ombudsman – you are there to:
  - Help solve concerns or problems.
  - Advocate for residents rights and to promote quality care.
  - Listen, provide information, and speak on the resident's behalf, if needed.
  - Specifically,
    - Bring resident and family member concerns/complaints to the staff's attention, and to seek resolution,
    - Attend care plan meetings and resident/family council meetings, when invited.

## 2 - Remind Residents that...

- You will check on them often to see if they have any concerns that need attention.
- You keep all conversations confidential.
- They have the right to contact you, their ombudsman, and to alert staff if they wish to speak with you.
- They can also contact you by calling the telephone number on the poster located in the facility.

## 3 – Do's and Don'ts

- **Do spend time with residents to establish a level of trust.**
- **Do relay to residents their rights and available services.**
- **Do report to residents, the status of their complaints.**
- **Do validate resident's concerns.**
- **Do support resident's decisions—even if you don't agree with it.**
- **Don't enter a room without knocking.**
- **Don't engage in a power struggle or dispute.**
- **Don't appear Pro-Facility.**
- **Don't break confidentiality.**
- **Don't forget that your professional role is more than just "friendship."**

# Crossing the line...

## Self Assessment in your role as Ombudsman



# INAPPROPRIATE



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# APPROPRIATE



# Developing an Ombudsman Appropriate Relationship with the Administrator



# Working Together!



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# 1 – Establish or Re-establish Your Role as Ombudsman

- Set up a meeting if necessary  
*(staff ombudsmen will assist if needed)*
- Acknowledge the difficulty of their job
- Emphasize that we are all working toward the same goal
- Let them know you are there to:
  - Help them settle problems (before they go to DOH level, which provides a faster response and solution for resident concerns)
  - Help promote a win /win situation for residents and the facility as a whole—the home/community of residents
  - Be a third party voice to support resident needs / rights
  - Provide feedback, which in turn helps to improve residents' quality of life and care

## 2 – Facility Visit

- Touch base when you enter the facility and when you exit — regardless of whether you have something to report.
- **Praise their “positives!”**
- Remind them that you are available to attend care plans, resident council meetings, provide conflict resolution, etc.
- Never pass up an opportunity to remind them that you are there **to help**.

## 3 - When Reporting a Problem or Concern ...

- Relay the concern in a diplomatic and tactful way.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of the issue at hand.
- Explore potential resolutions.
- Obtain a commitment for when the agreed upon resolution will be implemented.
- Most Importantly: Follow up.

You may have to remind them  
again, about a problem!



## 4 – Once an Issue is Resolved... Affirm the Administrator

- **Thank them!**
  - ✓ ...for their quick or steadfast response
  - ✓ ...for their efforts
- Let them know how happy the family or resident is with the resolution.
- Encourage them to please call again, anytime, if they need your assistance.

# Developing a Relationship with Department Heads and Direct Care Workers



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# 1 – Establish Your Role

- Request to in-service staff about the program.
- Explain how the program handles complaints.
- Emphasize your role as an advocate for the residents.



## 2 – Interaction with Staff

- When interacting with staff members, take every opportunity to explain what you do as an ombudsman.
- Call them by “name.”
- Let them know it is your job to bring resident concerns to their attention.
- Accentuate your desire to help them identify resident needs, but do not take a “power” stance.
- Never directly correct an aide/worker; speak to their supervisor, only if necessary.
- Remain courteous, even if they are rude.

## 3 - Praise!

**MOST IMPORTANTLY: Take every opportunity to praise work well done -- directly to workers!**

When in contact with aides, acknowledge how difficult their job is and praise them for their obvious compassion, super efforts or attentiveness!



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# Report “Good Works” to the Administrator



- Report “positives” to the administrator and let the worker know you are reporting his/her superior work efforts; so... find out the worker’s “name.”
- Report to superiors when residents’ praise the effort of particular workers. Ask the residents if they mind if you relay their “praise” to the administrator.
- Commend the administrator for successfully leading staff to strive for excellence in caring for residents.

**Remain Calm... even if it seems  
hopeless...**

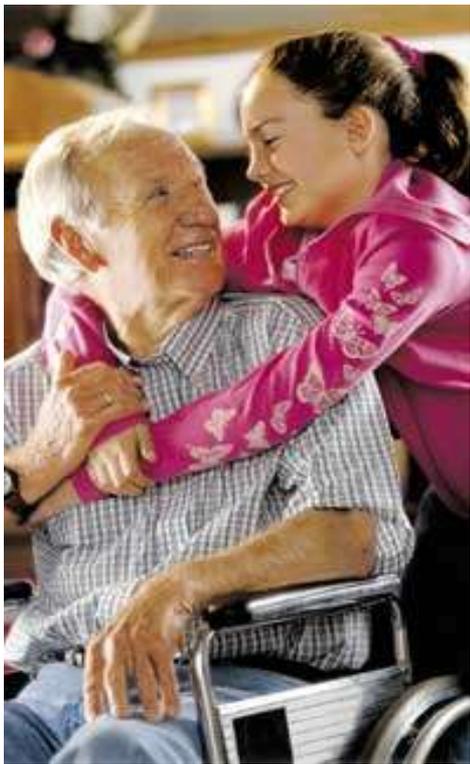


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**Call your coordinator if you need support or assistance in any situation — they are here to help you!!**



**GOOD  
TIMES  
!!!**



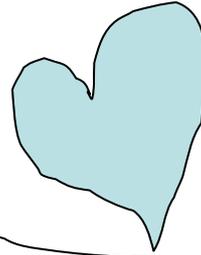


# Thank you for being an encourager!



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# In Conclusion...

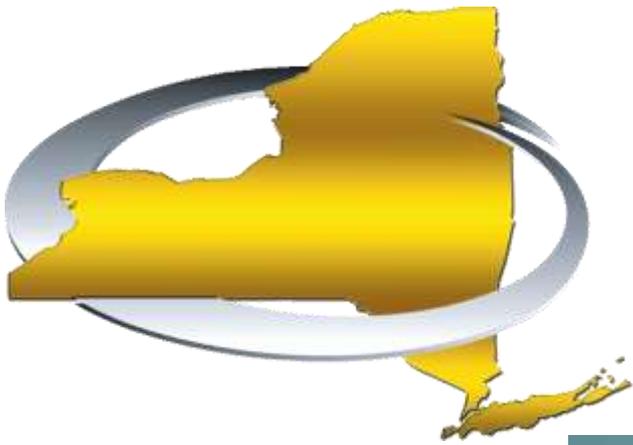


**Walking the fine line between residents and staff... takes patience, courage and understanding.**

**It involves the ability to balance and maintain relationships in a way that avoids conflict and power struggles while acknowledging the efforts of others.**

**Thank you for  
serving the  
elderly !!!**





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This presentation  
adapted from material  
developed by the  
Texas Long Term Care  
Ombudsman Program