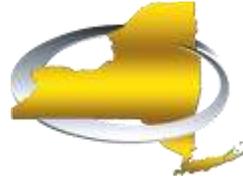


One of your primary missions is to **empower** residents and their family members to resolve problems by themselves. You want to help them have a sense of confidence that they can successfully address issues. You do this by providing information, guidance, and support. If necessary, you go with them to discuss issues with facility personnel or others. The information in these guidelines will also be helpful in your coaching a resident or family member in working through a problem. The process you use as an ombudsman is the same one you'll be advising residents or their family members to use.

Step One: Problem Clarification

Consider the following questions when deciding whether or not to investigate an issue:

- What is the complainant telling you? What are the individual circumstances surrounding the issue?
- Are any problems or concerns being expressed?
- What is being omitted, or glossed over, in the conversation? Is there a problem or concern that isn't being stated directly?
- Is the issue appropriate for the ombudsmen to address, or is there another agency or entity that could more effectively address the concern?
Is the resident willing to act on his/her own behalf in pursuing further action?
- Will the resident allow you to identify his/her while you are gathering more information about the situation and trying to resolve it?
- Does the resident fear, or has the resident experienced retaliation for voicing a complaint?
- What does the resident want?
- What actions has the resident taken regarding the problem?
- What response did the resident receive?
- Does the resident want any assistance from you such as information, suggestions about additional steps to take?
- Has the issue already been investigated?
- How often does it happen?
- How old is the issue?
- Is the issue impacting a number of residents?
- What is the appropriate complaint code that captures the problem?



Empower or Investigate

