



CHOICE+ e-learning Guidebook

Heather Keller, RD, PhD, FDC, FCAHS,
Schlegel Research Chair in Nutrition and Aging

Sarah Wu, PhD
Gerontological Researcher



Acknowledgement

Content development was supported by the CHOICE+ Advisory Committee, members of the Nutrition and Aging Lab, and RIA staff, with funding provided by the Ontario Government to Ontario for Learning, Research, and Innovation in Long-Term Care (Ontario CLRI), Alzheimer Society Research Program (doctoral award), and the University of Waterloo's Network for Aging Research. A special thank you to the homes, residents, families, and teams who participated in the developmental and pilot studies for CHOICE+.

Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA), 2025



Table of Contents

Purpose of this Guidebook	4
Introduction: About the CHOICE+ Program	5
CHOICE+ Background	5
What is CHOICE+	5
CHOICE+ Principles	6
Benefits of CHOICE+	8
Before You Begin	8
8 Steps for Making Change	9
Module One: Getting Started	10
Step 1: Building the Reason for Change	10
Step 2: Rallying the Champions	11
Module One Summary	14



Module Two: Engaging Partners.....	15
Step 3: Finding out what’s important.....	15
Step 4: Picking the priorities	19
Module Two Summary.....	21
Module Three: Making Changes	22
Step 5: Finding the fixes	22
Step 6: Putting the fixes in place	25
Step 7: Seeing What Worked & Tweaking It	26
Step 8: Keep it going	28
Summary and next steps.....	30
References.....	31
Appendix.....	32

Purpose of this Guidebook

The purpose of the CHOICE+ e-learning Guidebook is to support the implementation of CHOICE+ in retirement, assisted living, and long-term care (LTC) homes. This guidebook focuses on making the CHOICE+ Principles come to life in your unique dining room.

This guidebook is intended to accompany the CHOICE+ Champions for Change e-learning Course, and the following should be considered:

- The e-learning course acts as an example of how CHOICE+ can be implemented in retirement, assisted living, and LTC homes.
- All of the resources needed to implement the CHOICE+ program are within the appendix of this guidebook.

Within the CHOICE+ program, there are [8 Steps for Making Change](#) that will help you and your team create meaningful change at mealtimes. This guidebook is structured around the three modules in the e-learning course, with the eight steps incorporated into each module. Refer to the table of contents for the detailed layout.

By using this guidebook and participating in the CHOICE+ Champions for Change e-learning Course, you will be prepared to adapt the [CHOICE+ Principles](#) to your homes and dining rooms and enhance the mealtime experience for everyone.

Introduction: About the CHOICE+ Program

CHOICE+ Background

Years of speaking with residents, families, and team members, as well as conducting several research projects have suggested there is an opportunity to make improvements to mealtimes. Lessons learned from these experiences are included in this guidebook.

Often, within retirement, assisted living, and LTC homes, the focus of meals is on meeting nutritional or physical needs. As a result, mealtimes can fall short in meeting social needs, an important aspect of overall health and well-being. CHOICE+ was created to help you and your team make meaningful connections at mealtimes.

Research has shown that mealtimes matter at every stage of life. Sharing meals with others helps to strengthen our ties with our peers, friends, family, and social network; they are key to our quality of life and well-being. When meals become focused solely on the tasks involved in eating, we lose the “social promise” of mealtimes that we all need.

A research team led by Heather Keller, PhD, RD, FDC, FCAHS, Schlegel Research Chair in Nutrition and Aging, at the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) explored what residents living in LTC eat and what factors help them get the most nutrients. The research study, called Making the Most of Mealtimes (M3), highlighted opportunity areas to improve nutrition and mealtimes in LTC, reinforcing that social interactions could improve food intake.

As a leader and CHOICE+ Champion, you understand the importance of and impact this program can have in retirement, assisted living, and LTC homes. A CHOICE+ Champion Leader can be anyone working in LTC and retirement communities with a passion for improving mealtime practices and enhancing the dining experience for everyone —the role is not limited to those in management or on food services teams.

What is CHOICE+

CHOICE+ aims to improve the mealtime experience for people living in retirement, assisted living, and LTC homes. Based on six key principles, CHOICE+ focuses on creating relationship-centred practices and enhancing the dining environment.

It encourages us to ask ourselves—how can we make mealtimes something to look forward to for residents, family, and staff? How can we make these experiences nourishing not only for the body, but also for the mind and soul?



The goal of CHOICE+ is to create mealtimes that feel like home, where each person’s preferences are respected, their dignity is honoured, and positive relationships, including between team members and residents, can flourish.

CHOICE+ Principles

CHOICE+ is based on the following six key principles:



1. **Connecting**

Mealtimes are just as much about spending time with others as they are about eating. For those who live in retirement, assisted living, and LTC homes, mealtimes are often the most socially interactive time they have in their day. It is important to make the most of these opportunities to spend time with others, be seen, and heard. The objective of social engagement is that residents and family feel welcomed, that they belong in the dining room, and that this time can nurture relationships.

2. **Honouring Dignity**

Mealtimes meet social/personal expectations around how a meal should happen and culturally sensitive dining etiquette. In some situations, additional steps may be taken to ensure that residents' dignity is honoured, especially if they have difficulty eating independently. Regardless, residents, family, and team members should feel they matter and belong.

3. **Offering Support**

Offering residents the right type of support at the right time can help them feel independent, dignified, and autonomous during meals. This can be done in many different ways, from one-on-one assistance to ensuring orientation cues are in place to let them know mealtime is about to begin. It's important to remember the type of support a resident may need may change from meal to meal, and the resident participates in this decision, wherever possible.

4. **Identity**

Food, mealtime routines, and rituals help to maintain a person's sense of identity, their history, their culture, and their ethnicity. This means that while there are certain aspects of meals that are routine for your whole dining room, special attention does need to be given to meeting individual preferences and needs.

5. Creating Opportunities

Everyone has a long-developed relationship with food and sharing food with others. People form routines and rituals that give meals meaning and significance, even if they may seem unremarkable or mundane – like setting the table. Some residents will continue to take pleasure in playing a part in these mealtime routines, which will help them feel like they are doing something special for their peers.

6. Enjoyment

The physical environment plays an important part in supporting enjoyable mealtime experiences. Light, noise, dining room setup, and decorations, for instance, have a big impact on how people are able to interact with one another during meals. This physical environment provides the stage for an enjoyable meal. The five principles above work together to result in the positive ambiance that is

Enacting the CHOICE+ Principles is the main goal of any relationship-centred mealtime, but the way they look and feel will be different depending on the context of the home and dining room. For example, how many residents eat in the dining room, their culture and specific needs, how long team members have worked there, how the dining room is designed, and so forth, will all impact how the CHOICE+ Principles take form.

The CHOICE+ Principles involve the concepts of person-centred care, relationship-centred care, and relational dining^{1,2,3} and are consistent with social models of care (see table 1). If you have started on a culture change journey, the following terms may already be familiar to you.

Table 1: Social Models of Care

Term	Description
Person-Centre Care	• Person-centred care is about meeting the needs and care preferences of residents, and honouring their choices. • For mealtimes, this means promoting choice and preferences, supporting independence with eating, and showing respect. It is important to empathize with residents and try to understand mealtimes from their perspective.
Relationship-Centred Care	• Relationship-centred care is about providing care that supports social interactions in mutually beneficial relationships. It emphasizes the importance of exchange between two people. • For mealtimes, this means supporting positive interactions that build and sustain relationships between residents, family, volunteers, and the team.
Relational Dining	• Relational dining is about supporting everyone (i.e., team members, residents, family, and volunteers) to provide relationship-centred care during meals. • For mealtimes, this means home policies, practices, meal schedules, team organization, food availability, and the physical dining room should align to support person- and relationship-centred care.

Explore the related resources section at the-ria.ca/choice to better understand the CHOICE+ Principles and Best Practices.

Benefits of CHOICE+

CHOICE+ builds a strong foundation for making lasting change. It was built around the concepts of “change management” and a “Model for Improvement”, which we will explore later in this guidebook.

By using CHOICE+, leadership, team members, residents, families, and volunteers work together to make ongoing improvements. The areas for improvement are not prescriptive; the way each retirement, assisted living, and LTC home chooses to implement the CHOICE+ Principles will be unique. The key is that the team communicates and works together to problem-solve and provide the best possible mealtime experience for everyone. You determine what needs to change and how to make it happen. By making CHOICE+ your own, your entire team will be better able to change practices and sustain improvements, especially as team members and residents come and go. Overall, CHOICE+ enhances the experience for all those who are involved in mealtimes.

Benefits of CHOICE+:

- Improves quality of life for residents by making mealtimes a meaningful part of the day.
- Involves residents and families in determining mealtime needs and preferences.
- Gives team members a voice in the decision-making process.
- Empowers teams to problem-solve and make lasting change in and out of the dining room.
- Improves the mealtime experience for both residents and team members.
- Creates a work environment that embraces self-reflection and empowerment.
- Improves communication between leadership, team members, residents, and families.
- Encourages team members to bridge disciplinary roles to improve mealtimes for all, improving team functioning.

Before You Begin

Now that you have started on your journey to becoming a CHOICE+ Champion Leader, there are a few things to consider before you start rolling it out in your home. First, it is important to recognize that changing the culture of care—including how mealtimes happen in your home—takes time. Culture change is a collaborative process that requires a team and a tailored approach to engagement, discovery, and reflection to meet a home's unique needs.

Before any changes can be made to mealtime practices, a core group of people (specifically team members and leadership) should “buy in” to the idea that change is needed if improvements are going to be made; they must believe that mealtimes can and need to be better. This core group of people will be the CHOICE+ Dining Team (CDT). As a CHOICE+ Champion Leader, your role will be to guide team members through the process of making change, typically starting in one specific dining room and then spreading to another.

Establishing a Culture of Improvement

Before starting CHOICE+, your home leadership would have been encouraged to complete a [Pulse Check questionnaire](#) to ensure key supports are in place to promote success with CHOICE+ implementation. The Pulse Check Questionnaire helps assess the current culture in your home and consider the area of the home to start CHOICE+.

Home areas need to be ready to undertake a change in practice, and a culture of continuous improvement is needed. Similarly, having the home, team members, residents, and family on the same page with respect to seeing the potential for improvements at mealtimes is needed. They should believe in the value of CHOICE+ Principles and prioritize mealtimes as central to care. Leadership support is key to empowering CHOICE+ Champions and driving lasting change. Be sure to meet with your leadership often as you embark on CHOICE+. For more information, visit the-ria.ca/choice.

Choosing a Focus Area

Choosing which dining area to focus on is an important and strategic step when implementing CHOICE+. Factors considered in selecting the priority dining area(s) include the dining area's routines and rituals, whether or not mealtime service is working well, and whether a group of residents, families, and team members is ready for change.

The dining room you and your team will focus on was selected based on a group decision that implementing CHOICE+ would be worthwhile in that particular dining area. Ideally, this area of the home would include strong leadership from champions and good communication from team members, resulting in a more relationship-centred dining experience. Explore the considerations in selecting a dining area by reviewing [tips for choosing a focus area](#) in the Appendix.

8 Steps for Making Change

The 8 Steps for Making Change explains how CHOICE+ Champions can work with their team to create lasting change based on the CHOICE+ Principles.



1: Building the Reason for Change

2: Rallying the Champions



3: Finding out what's important

4: Picking the priorities



5: Finding the fixes

6: Putting the fixes in place



7: Seeing What Worked & Tweaking It

8: Keep it going



Module One: Getting Started

Step 1: Building the Reason for Change

Before implementing CHOICE+, it is important to work with team members, residents, and families to build awareness and understanding about the CHOICE+ Principles and reasons for embarking on this journey.

Awareness is also needed about the dual purpose of mealtimes—to eat and to socialize with others. This step may take some time and should not be rushed. Expect to do a variety of activities to increase this awareness; in reality, it is an ongoing effort!

For ideas on [how to build awareness](#), such as sharing a [memo](#) or [displaying a poster](#), refer to the Appendix.

When team members, residents, and families understand why a change is needed, they will be more likely to want to make improvements. Determining the “why” of improving mealtimes is a necessary first step⁹. For ideas on engaging with partners and building awareness, refer to the resource below.

As you engage with individuals about CHOICE+, take note of whether someone shows interest and has ideas on how to make improvements. This will help to identify possible CHOICE+ Champion Leaders who will make up the initial CHOICE+ Dining Team (CDT). Be sure to let them know that they are welcome to help with the initiative.

Mealtime Satisfaction Questionnaire for Residents

An important aspect of the CHOICE+ program is feedback. It is important to understand where and why change is needed; this can be done by gathering feedback from residents and family members using the [Mealtime Satisfaction Questionnaire for Residents](#). We will also discuss later tools that can get team member perspectives.

Guidelines for Working Together

When working together, it is helpful to create guidelines on the tone and expectations for the CDT and team members, residents, and families who are involved in making dining improvements. Guidelines will vary depending on the needs and context of your specific group. It is important to take time to develop these together with the CDT.

Refer to the Appendix for [Guidelines on Working Together](#).



Step 2: Rallying the Champions

The CHOICE+ Dining Team

Successfully implementing CHOICE+ takes a team effort. It is important to create a CHOICE+ Dining Team (CDT) that will work towards making lasting change and keep the CHOICE+ Principles alive and a priority.

The CDT team is made up of CHOICE+ Champion Leaders and Mealtime Champions, refer to **Table 2: Roles of the CHOICE+ Dining Team** for more details, who are a diverse group of dedicated team members, leadership, residents, family members, and volunteers who have an impact on the mealtime experience.

The CDT takes an active leadership role in their dining room to carry out CHOICE+ by advocating and supporting team members with mealtime improvements. This can take the form of leading huddles, discussing and planning areas for improvement, and mentoring team members at mealtimes.

The purpose of the CDT is to prioritize changes based on others' input and determine how to make and sustain the improvements. Planning for change takes time, and there is often limited time for lengthy meetings in residential care. However, having a few people (the CDT) who can initially get together to do this planning will help to get things going.

Sometimes, the CDT may not be formalized until the CHOICE+ Champion Leader [engages partners](#) (see Module Two) in imagining how mealtimes can be improved based on the CHOICE+ Principles. Often, those passionate about making change will self-identify that they want to help lead this initiative. Regardless, starting with a few passionate people and engaging others in what needs to change will help to build momentum and identify why CHOICE+ Principles need to be put into action in the dining room.

Who should be involved?

The following individuals all have a role to play when it comes to the CHOICE+ program.

- Leadership
- Team members
- Residents
- Family members
- Volunteers

Roles of the CHOICE+ Dining Team

The CDT can be as small as three people or as large as 6 to 8 people. One or two of these members should be CHOICE+ Champion Leaders, and the others should be Mealtime Champions. Team members who are passionate and understand why mealtimes need to be social and relationship-focused should be involved. It is good to ensure that some CDT members participate in breakfast and lunch, as well as dinner, as meal timing can differ significantly in terms of areas that need improvement. The roles of those on the CDT are described below.



Table 2: Roles of the CHOICE+ Dining Team

Role	CHOICE+ Champion Leaders	Mealtime Champion
Description	The CHOICE+ Champion Leader(s) is the coach for the dining room keeping the CHOICE+ initiative moving forward. They participate in the CHOICE+ Champion Leader Training, and facilitate regular CDT Meetings.	Mealtime Champions are guided by the CHOICE+ Champion Leader and share in the responsibility of making change. They participate in CDT meetings and engage with partners.
Who	• R1 – 2 people • It can be anyone with a passion for improving mealtimes.	• 2-6 people • It can be anyone with a passion for improving mealtimes, including leadership, team members, residents, family members, and volunteers. • At least two people should be team members in the dining room on different shifts.
What	The CHOICE+ Champion Leader(s): • Guides the CDT through the process of making a change • Strengthens the ability of the CDT to work together • Ensures that CDT meetings are fair and inclusive • Builds a respectful, trusting, and supportive environment	Mealtime Champions: • Work together to implement changes in line with CHOICE+ Principles • Get feedback from others involved in mealtime practices • Mentor other team members and care partners on making change • Build a respectful, trusting, and supportive environment

Refer to the Appendix for more information about [CDT Roles and Responsibilities](#).

Recruiting a CHOICE+ Dining Team

When thinking about who to approach to join the CDT, start with the “believers”—those who feel passionate about making mealtimes better. Residents, family members, volunteers, and team members who show initial interest in CHOICE+ are great recruits for the CDT. As discussed previously, this may take time and may actually result from the next step of partner engagement. Some may be hesitant to join—perhaps they are unclear about what is “in it” for them, or that it is a meaningful initiative for everyone. Some team members may need to be “shoulder tapped” to participate.

Take time to develop a committed team. Talk up the initiative. Explain to team members that they are valuable for setting a new direction for mealtimes. Being part of the initiative is also a good opportunity for them to learn new skills and improve teamwork in the neighbourhood.

As the CDT starts engaging with the home, others might want to join the team. Individuals can be welcomed to the CDT at any time. As you create your team, you may find it helpful to record the names and contact information of individuals on the CDT Member List. This is especially important if volunteers and family members are involved, as you will want to contact them to set up meetings.

You may also find that the CDT becomes less formal after the initial steps of engaging and prioritizing what needs to change. After this point, family and residents may decide to step back and let the team and CHOICE+ Champion Leader continue. Team huddles may become informal CDT meetings as the CHOICE+ Principles begin to be worked through. Regardless, talking about change and planning for it should be kept front and centre by having regular meetings.

Developing a CDT Meeting Schedule

It is important to think about how often the CDT will meet to work on a CHOICE+ rollout plan; the frequency is a matter of capacity—what is important is that you meet! If you are not able to meet as frequently, changes may take longer to get going, but they will still happen. Establishing formal CDT meetings for the first few months will help identify how changes can be made and will build and sustain momentum.

It will be important to discuss with leadership how CDT meetings will be handled to support the participation of team members and other partners (e.g. offering back fill, paying for meeting time outside of usual shift, paying for parking, etc.). Again, this will depend on the home's capacity and resources of the home.



Module One Summary

Now that you have read through Module One, complete the following tasks:

- ✓ Build awareness of why change is needed at mealtimes
- ✓ Promote CHOICE+ for those who work and dine in the selected dining room
- ✓ Recruit members for the CDT
- ✓ Record names and roles of CDT members (optional)
- ✓ Develop a schedule for initial CDT meetings



Module Two: Engaging Partners

You have decided it's a good time to incorporate CHOICE+, selected the dining area, and assembled your CDT. Next we will consider engaging partners and determining priorities for change.

Step 3: Finding out what's important

Engaging Partners

One of the most important steps of implementing CHOICE+ Principles is getting input from partners involved in dining on what needs to improve to realize the goal of social, person- and relationship-centred mealtimes. Partners can be anyone who has an interest in mealtimes in the home—for example, residents, team members, family members, or volunteers. Requesting feedback from partners will help ensure meaningful change in the dining room and mealtime experience. Soliciting their ideas for improvement will also build awareness and engagement for making improvements. This process of engaging in “what can be” and why it is important will take time and should be seen as an ongoing activity. Communication is central to making and sustaining improvements.

Family councils, resident councils, and food councils are a great way to reach some of the most engaged partners. It is important to remember, though, that these groups/councils are most likely made up of individuals from numerous neighbourhoods. For this reason, it is critical to host a forum or a meeting specifically with those who have meals in the target dining room to hear their ideas. It is also important to reach out to others who might be less involved in the home activities for whatever reason (for example, some residents may find it more challenging to participate in group discussions and would prefer a one-on-one conversation). Establishing good communication channels in your home will help with this. Working through scenarios or having partners describe what is important to their meals can help identify why improvements in the target dining room are needed.

For [tips to engage partners](#), refer to the Appendix.

Using Participatory Decision-Making to Set Priorities

Participatory decision-making is key to making lasting change and improvements that are viewed as necessary by partners. Participatory decision-making has the following core values¹⁰:

1. Full Participation

- All partners are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings. By speaking their minds, they become braver at sharing “first draft” ideas. They also become better at acknowledging the diverse opinions and backgrounds of others during group decision-making.

2. Mutual Understanding

- When partners understand and accept the legitimacy of other people's ideas and opinions, there is the potential to reach a sustainable agreement. Being open to other people's needs and goals helps bring forward new ideas that benefit everyone. It is important to remember that different groups within a home may experience different barriers or challenges to mealtimes than others. It is important to acknowledge these differences as legitimate and equally important as other people's experiences. It is also important to hear others and not ‘blame’ a group for the way things are currently done. Recognize in your own roles how you can improve as well.

3. Inclusive Solutions

- Solutions must be inclusive and benefit everyone, including those who are marginalized or who may be too shy to share their needs and opinions. Try to be sensitive to those who may be less inclined to share at the beginning. Find other ways to engage these people within safe spaces, such as talking one-on-one privately or offering a comments box to ensure anonymity. Avoid blaming and focusing on a single team member or group as the source of the problem, or those who need to change. Solutions come best from those in specific activities, so give them a safe space to discuss their ideas on how they can make what they do better.

4. Shared Responsibility

- When goals are suggested and endorsed by everyone, there is a shared responsibility for managing and sustaining them.

These core values are especially important for team members who are not typically involved in making decisions that impact the neighbourhood. The CHOICE+ Champion Leader's role is to create the space for participatory decision-making.

While working with the CDT, you may experience some challenges when trying to include everyone in the participatory process of deciding what needs to be improved. The table below lists four challenges and a potential solution for each.



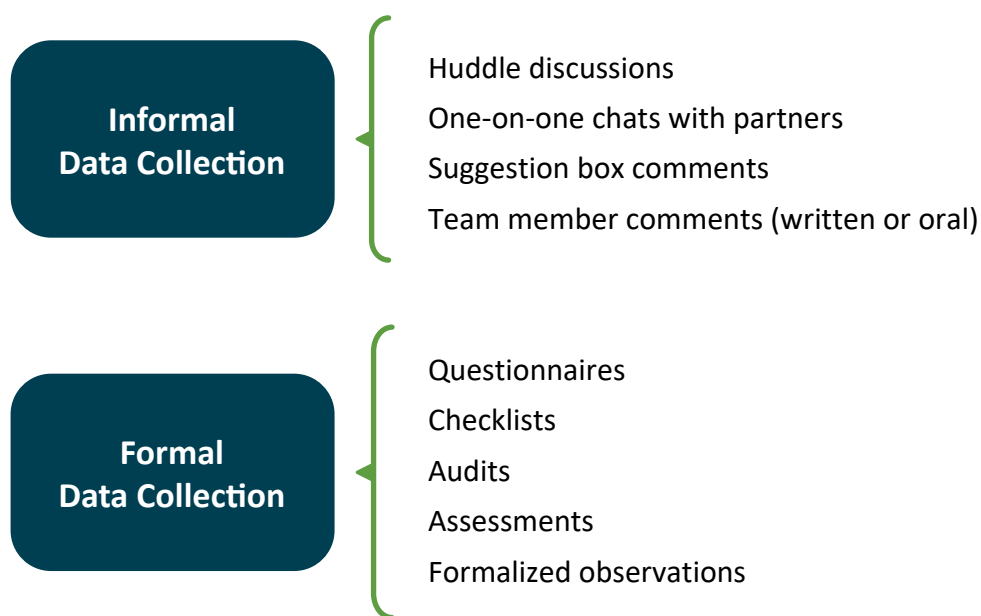
Table 3: Challenges to Participatory Decision-making

Challenge	Solution
Clamming up	Ensure that everyone feels heard, especially those who may have “silly questions” or who may be shy or quiet. Find other ways of engaging them by creating safe spaces for them to share, whether in a group setting or individually. Encourage their responses by valuing what they have said publicly, such as referring to their idea as a “good one” or something that is important to consider.
Refusing to budge	Accept that there will be misunderstandings in the beginning and that different people will have different perspectives on particular issues. Work to ensure that everyone feels heard and respected. Model respectful listening and compromise.
Focusing on the negative	Help partners and the CDT search for ideas that incorporate everyone’s point of view and move beyond simply stating problems. Listening and acknowledging barriers is the first step, but the group must work beyond this to come up with creative solutions.
Focusing on what others need to do	By focusing on what others need to do, accountability and responsibility are shifted to others rather than the self. Blaming others results in a spirit of uncooperativeness and erodes team dynamics. Work to provide the view that “we are all in this together” and that everyone has a role to play in making improvements. What can they do?
Relying on authority	Help break the pattern of relying on authority and deferring to leadership by fostering assertiveness, collaboration, and shared responsibility amongst fellow members of the CDT.

Collecting Information

How will you know whether you've made a change? Whether you're improving or struggling? Information, or data, is needed at the start to help determine what needs to be changed. This is sometimes referred to as "baseline data," where you're starting from. It can also be used to show how far the home area has come, and where there is still room for improvement. Data is also essential for sustaining improvements so that changes can be made according to the direction efforts are going. When mealtimes are evaluated in a standardized way, the findings may help to alter assumptions, which can help to motivate partners to make a change or to keep up with their efforts.

There are many ways of collecting information and many types of data. For CHOICE+, data collection is categorized as either informal or formal. Some examples are provided below.



It is important to record both formal and informal data to track progress. The [CHOICE+ Mealtime Practices Checklist](#), available in the Appendix, is useful for team members to reflect on their current practice.

CHOICE+ checklists are designed to improve the mealtime and dining experiences. Visit the-ria.ca/resources/choice-checklist/ for the Mealtime Practices Checklist and Dining Room Checklist. Both checklists are available in English and French.

For additional data collection tools, like the [team member mealtime experience questionnaire](#) or the [CHOICE+ Audit](#), refer to the Appendix.



These formal data collection tools can help you collect and record data about mealtimes in your dining room and support priority-setting activities. Your home may also have developed its own quality measures, such as satisfaction questionnaires, which can also be used. Consider whether you can add some questions to them to cover all aspects of mealtimes.

Remember that an investment of time and effort must be made when deciding to collect data: someone will have to administer these tools, gather responses, enter the data to be analyzed, and present this data back to partners. This may seem like a lot of work, but if you don't know where you're starting from, it will be harder in the future to determine how far you've progressed as a team.

See Appendix for an example of a [template for tracking improvement](#), and a [Sample of Mealtime Experience Improvement Tracking](#).

Step 4: Picking the priorities

Summarizing Information

Now that you have collected information on what people think could be improved in the dining room, it is time to summarize and analyze the comments and feedback received from partners. Reviewing this information will give CDT members an idea of which parts of mealtimes are going well and which areas need more focus.

The first step is for the CHOICE+ Champion Leader and 1-2 other members of the CDT to work on collecting and summarizing all the information in a meaningful way so that other members of the CDT and partners to see the results. This may involve putting data into a graph, a table, a diagram, or expressing findings through pictures.

For tips on how to [summarize information](#), refer to the Appendix.

Discussing Findings

Now that the ideas on what needs to change have been summarized, it is time to discuss the findings with the CDT members and partners. CHOICE+ Champion Leaders can present high-level results from these summaries and hold a brief discussion about the feedback received. The idea is to go through the results in a systematic way to determine which parts of mealtimes are going well and which areas need more focus.

For guidance on what to discuss, use the [Tips for Discussing Findings](#) resource available in the Appendix.

Prioritizing Ideas

Now that the CDT has reflected on their own practice and reviewed feedback from partners, it is time to prioritize a list of ideas for improving mealtimes. For the team to develop buy-in, all partners should have input into choosing the priorities for improvement. Each partner group will likely have different views on what they think should be the priority. It is important to account for these differences so that the areas selected for improvement are meaningful to everyone. Consider whether separate meetings should be held for team members, residents, and families to provide their input, so that one group's opinion does not dominate.

To help narrow down the priorities, it is recommended that the Champion Leader and CDT develop a "top 10" list that can be shared with partner groups. These groups, either together or separately, can identify the top one or two *most* important areas to work on first. This can be done through voting and informal discussion facilitated by the Champion Leader.

Refer to the Appendix for tips on [creating a "top 10" list of priorities](#).

It is recommended to focus on about 3-6 goals for improvement (e.g., reducing noise, stimulating social interaction, etc.) during a one-year period. Keep in mind that physical changes are sometimes easier to start with and are often more immediate, while behavioural changes (e.g., facilitating social conversation) are often more challenging and can take longer to implement.

Communicating Goals

Once the top priorities have been identified, it is important to restate them as goals. An example is provided below.

- Priority: Connecting with residents who do not communicate using words.
- Goal: “We communicate with *all* residents at mealtimes by smiling, making eye contact, and using light touch.”

Restating the priorities as goals helps to make them more “real” and achievable.

The ability to make change using CHOICE+ often depends on good communication – think about what ways and how often partners can be meaningfully engaged. Communicating decisions on what will be worked on first or over the course of a year is important. Remember, those who are part of building the solution should take part in ensuring the plan is put into place to do so.



Once the goals have been identified, it is important to determine how you will share them with the broader group of partners. This will help to get their support moving forward.

You may also need to communicate why some of the suggested improvements are not the focus at this time or whether there will be delays in moving certain suggestions forward. For example, some aspects of the physical environment may be hard to address without making significant renovations. Instead of dwelling on these areas, consider focusing on areas that can be improved, like purchasing placemats, table and wall decorations, or playing relaxing music.

Taking on a large initiative such as CHOICE+ can be overwhelming, and at times, a daunting idea for those involved. Letting team members, residents, family members, and volunteers know that they are being listened to and valued throughout the process is a critical part of reinforcing the skills and knowledge they have to offer. Communicating goals with partners will help to build trust among everyone involved in the process of improving mealtimes.

It is important to consider what each partner already knows, needs to know, and when they need to know it. Provide details that are sufficient for that specific group at the right time, so that the information is not overwhelming.

For [tips on how to communicate your goals](#) for change, refer to the Appendix.

The Mealtime Goal Poster can be displayed near the dining room. It acts as a daily reminder and shares information about the team's goal.

Refer to the Appendix to download the [Mealtime Goal Poster](#).

Module Two Summary

Now that you have read through Module Two, complete the following tasks:

- ✓ Engage partners in different ways to identify what changes they think are important.
- ✓ Collect and record information on what needs to change.
- ✓ Obtain ideas and suggestions for improvement from partners.
- ✓ Summarize the information collected.
- ✓ Discuss the comments and feedback received from partners.
- ✓ Create a prioritized “top 10” list of ideas for improvement.
- ✓ Share the “top 10” list with partners and vote to identify which priorities you will work on first.
- ✓ Determine which priorities will be worked on first; restate them as goals.
- ✓ Communicate the goals with partners. Use several forms of communication to reach all partners.

Module Three: Making Changes

Now that you have met with partners, and prioritized and communicated areas for improvement, it's time to plan the activities to help reach your goals.

Step 5: Finding the fixes

For steps 5 through 8, CHOICE+ uses Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycles as a way to frame how change will happen and an Action Plan to document this process.

Table 4: PDCA Cycle Description:

Term	Description
Plan	Devise a plan to conduct “trial” activities to change the behaviour.
Do	Implement the trial that you have planned.
Check	Look at what happened. Did it work as planned? If not, brainstorm ideas on how it could work. Use information (informal or formal data) to determine next steps.
Act	Revise the initial plan to get closer to achieving your goal, based on what you know now.

The PDCA cycles allow the CDT to test an idea before fully committing to a new approach or strategy. The ideas that don't work well can be discontinued or tweaked, and those that do work can be implemented by the team for every meal. PDCA allows you to break down a change into small, manageable steps. Once you have planned, done, checked, and acted on a “trial” change, you can return to the goal and consider the next steps and actions required to reach the ultimate goal. You can think about PDCA cycles as a calculated trial-and-error. The first cycle may not always succeed—tweaking is often required to further improve the behaviour. Several cycles will likely be required before the desired behaviour becomes routine.

For more information about the [PDCA Cycle](#), refer to the Appendix.

Identifying Enablers and Barriers

Now that there is an understanding of what drives behaviour—whether wanted or unwanted—the CDT can start thinking about what behaviours are happening in the dining room, and what behaviours they'd like to change. A discussion on why a behavior happens or not can help the team identify potential solutions. The CDT can start by determining the “enablers” and “barriers” to the desired behaviour.

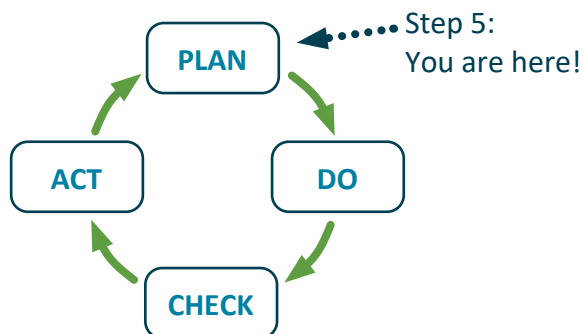


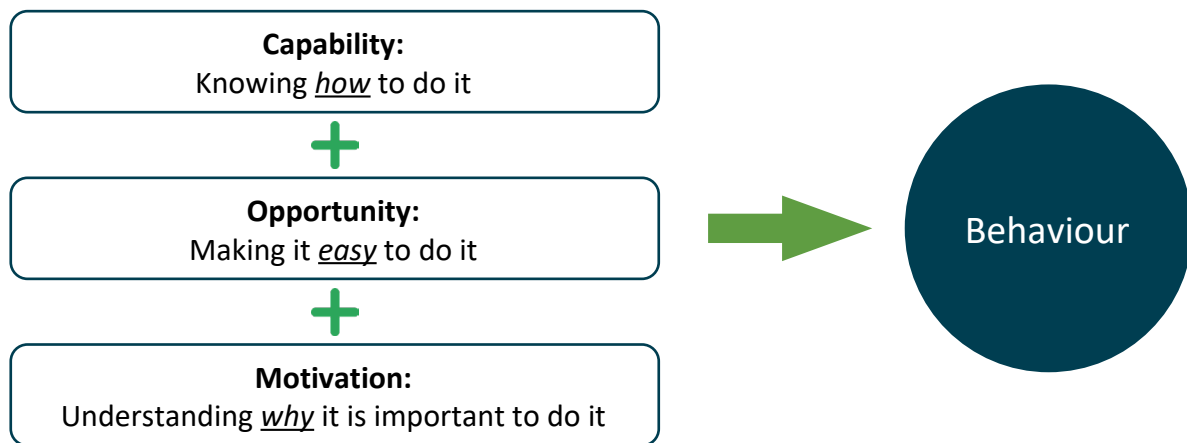
Table 5: Enablers and Barriers

Term	Description
Enablers	Factors that enable or support a specific behaviour to happen.
Barriers	Factors that prevent or slow down a specific behaviour from happening.

Understanding Behaviour: COM-B

This step focuses on the “Plan” phase of the PDCA cycle, which involves devising a plan to carry out concrete activities to change behaviour. Before devising a plan, it is important for the Champion Leader to understand some basic principles for changing behaviour. We can start by considering what drives current behaviour and what will drive the desired behaviour.

We use the *Behaviour Change Wheel*¹¹ to help Champion Leaders understand how to influence behaviour. The Behaviour Change Wheel suggests that all behaviour is driven by three factors that work together: Capability, Opportunity, and Motivation. This is known as *the COM-B model*.



Refer to the Appendix for [discussion questions](#) and tips for [influencing behaviour](#).

Developing an Action Plan

Now that you understand how enablers and barriers can impact efforts to make change, it is time to think of solutions and identify how to improve a specific behaviour. Start with one goal in mind; what is the behaviour you want to see happen? Writing down this goal and communicating it with the team makes it real. You may need to adjust the goal based on their feedback.

Developing an Action Plan can help break down the goal into smaller steps. The Action Plan outlines the steps of Plan, Do, Check, and Act. Through discussion with the CDT, it is important to determine which facilitators or barriers are potentially the most important for the goal you are working on. You may be initially wrong, and that is okay. The point is, you are trying to identify where to start with making this improvement.

Let's suppose the goal is to use social-focused talk when providing assistance with eating. Based on your analysis of the situation, the attitudes of team members seem to be the biggest barrier. Initial steps in the Action Plan could include:

1. Have team members review the CHOICE+ Principles.
2. Fill out the checklists for “Connecting” and “Honouring Dignity” together in huddles, using the example of residents who do not communicate using words—discuss what is standing in the way of team members interacting with these residents.
3. Discuss how social interaction supports relationship building.
4. Do a role-playing activity in a huddle—discuss how it feels when team members do not socially interact with the person playing the role of being assisted?
5. Post the goal as a motivational statement or aspiration in the dining area or team room.
6. (e.g. “We socially engage all residents in meaningful ways at mealtimes” or “We get down to the resident’s eye level”).

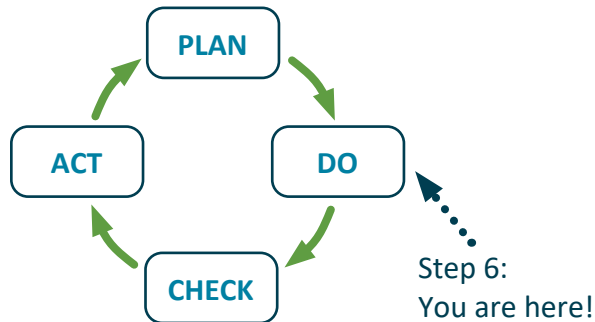


It is important to consider accountability and timelines. Who specifically will be involved in the steps to reach this goal – does it involve mostly team members in nursing or food services? What is your timeline? When do you hope to begin enacting this plan? Sometimes it is better to start with something that is easier to do, as this will have a more immediate effect (e.g. providing education or training, or making a small change to the physical environment in the dining room). Making change is hard; the Action Plan will likely evolve and change over time, but the key is to record your intentions at the outset.

For tips on developing an Action Plan, refer to the [worksheet](#) and [examples](#) available in the Appendix.

Step 6: Putting the fixes in place

PDCA Cycle: “Do” It!

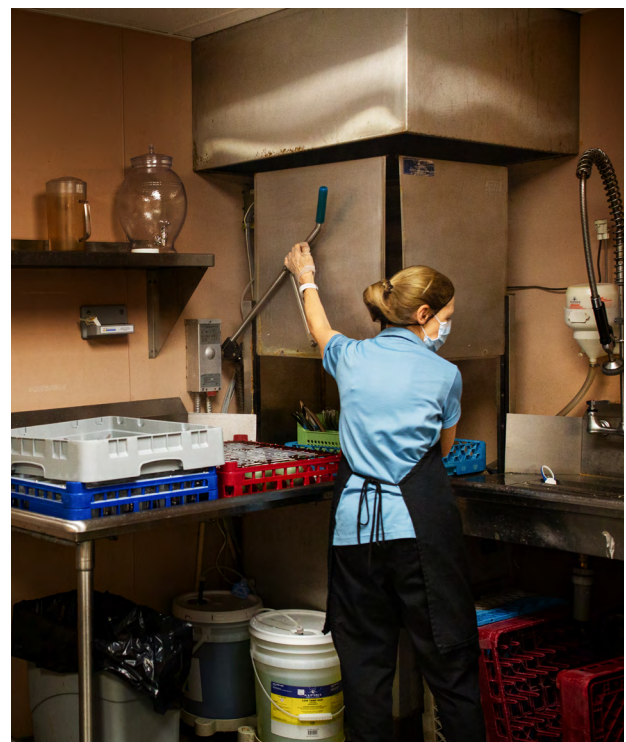


Now that you have planned what needs to change, the next step is to make the changes happen. This is the “Do” phase of the PDCA cycle. It is important to refer back to the Action Plan for direction on where to begin with each specific goal.

To facilitate the “Do” in your Action Plan, keep the plan concrete. Who will do what, when? Consider keeping these initial actions to a short timeframe, like two weeks.

Making Environmental Changes

As mentioned earlier, sometimes it is best to get started by making changes to the physical environment. Small changes can have a big impact on the surroundings in the dining room and how residents enjoy mealtimes. For example, let’s consider the goal of reducing excessive noise during mealtimes. There are several actions that team members could “do” to address this goal. First, the CDT could purchase a rubber spatula to scrape away leftover food from plates—this will eliminate the clattering of metal utensils against the dishes. The CDT could also develop a protocol around using the dishwasher at specific times—this would eliminate the sound of the dishwasher running during mealtimes. Other environmental changes could be as simple as purchasing new placements to make the tables more home-like or displaying artwork made by residents.



Providing Education and Training

Many of the improvements that your CDT and partners will be interested in will involve the behaviour of team members, volunteers, and family members. Providing education and training can be very helpful when working to change behaviour. Education is focused primarily on increasing knowledge, which can motivate the learner, while training is focused on developing skills that build capability. Both education and training could be included as some of the discrete activities in your Action Plan.

Step 7: Seeing What Worked & Tweaking It

PDCA Cycle: “Check” It and “Act” On It!

Now that you have implemented your Action Plan by “doing” things to change the environment or behaviour of team members, family or volunteers, the next step is to check what went well and what might need to be tweaked. This is the “Check” and “Act” phases of the PDCA cycle.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Change

As mentioned earlier, sometimes it is best to get started by making changes to the physical The CDT and partners should reflect on which changes are working, and which efforts need further attention and adjustment. This is the “Check” phase of the PDCA.

Informal data collection will likely be used more often than formal data collection. Monitoring activities can be fairly simple; for example, talking to team members and residents about how things are going, entering the dining room to observe if the desired behaviour is occurring, or discussing responses provided on the CHOICE+ checklists. Discussion can be used to understand what led to improvements so that they can be replicated.

For formal data collection, it is important to be able to summarize information and present it to partners. The CDT should consider not only *when* to communicate the data that has been collected, but also *how* to convey this information. It is also important for the CDT to determine how much monitoring and evaluation is enough to reinforce improvements, while not exhausting the efforts of the team. Carefully review any feedback with the CDT, as they will be able to elaborate on the reasons behind the information that is presented, and identify next the activities that tweak the behaviour or environmental change resulting in the specific mealtime goal.

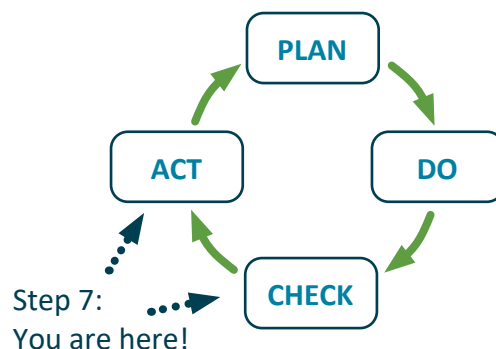
For tips on how to [summarize information](#) and [discuss findings](#), refer back to the tools introduced in *Step 4*.

Tweaking It

If monitoring and evaluation show that the plan is not resulting in the desired outcome, it is important to make adjustments to the plan. This is the “Act” phase of the PDCA. Remember – working towards the CHOICE+ goals is a trial-and-error process. It is okay to repeat this step and go through several rounds of revisions. The CDT and those involved in the action being modified will provide excellent information on what needs to change. Use this information to consider what needs to happen next to realize the specific mealtime goal.

For example, let’s suppose a team purchased a new blender to provide a point-of-service choice to residents who require pureed food. Afterwards, feedback from family indicated that noise during the meal increased. As the team was trying to achieve one goal (providing choice), this resulted in another goal (reducing noise) being affected.

It is important to be able to work together to troubleshoot these problems and come up with a new plan. Is there another way to provide choice without increasing noise? Discussing how and when the blender use could be modified to reduce noise would be a point of discussion for the CDT and greater team, so that both goals can be achieved.



Based on this discussion, new activities can be identified, and the CDT can make the necessary tweaks to the Action Plan and test it again. For example, perhaps team members can ask residents who have pureed meals for their preferences all at the same time, so that blending can be done once before the meal, rather than throughout the meal. This process of trial-and-error, or new PDCA cycles, continues until the desired outcome or the most feasible outcome is achieved.

Moving on to the Next Priority

Now that you have had some success with a specific goal, it is time to move on to your next priority. In reality, you may work on a few priorities at once and may need to refocus on one that was started earlier to ensure that it becomes routine in the dining area. Now that the CDT and greater team, families, residents, and volunteers have a sense that improvements can happen, it is important to keep moving forward and not stall. This is the crucial time for everyone to realize that, as a group, you are on a journey to continual improvement and “Making the Most of Mealtimes”. The next section discusses how to sustain these improvements and reinforces that CHOICE+ is a journey that will continue.



Step 8: Keep it going

Sustaining and Spreading CHOICE+

It is important for everyone involved in CHOICE+ to think about and plan for how to keep the momentum and motivation going with mealtime improvements. We will explore the concept of *sustaining* and *spreading*¹² the CHOICE+ Principles and how it can be tailored to your dining room.

Much like your experiences implementing the CHOICE+ Principles, sustainability efforts are a trial-and-error process. There will likely be some backtracking and a need for renewal on improvements. Sustainability requires continuous adaptation to meet the needs of those who live and work in the home area. As you have learned, you can use information and participatory processes to re-engage team members in sustaining improvements.

Once you have seen success in the first dining room, the home may be interested in spreading CHOICE+ to other dining spaces. Keep in mind that every dining room has a different approach to meals. For instance, the goals identified in the first dining room may not be priorities for the second or third dining room. Even the techniques you used to engage the CDT might need to be modified for another dining room. That being said, what's important about spreading CHOICE+ is identifying the key activities that worked really well in the first dining room and sharing them with dining rooms in the homes.

For tips on how to [sustain and spread CHOICE+](#), refer to the Appendix.

Planning for Growth

The CDT can discuss the following questions to help plan for sustaining and spreading CHOICE+.

Sustaining CHOICE+ in the current dining room:

- Is there consensus on what components of CHOICE+ need to be sustained and what the benefits of sustaining them are?
- How will leadership ensure that all team members review principles and be aware of the specific goals the CDT and partners have set out?
- Are there mechanisms in place that will support ongoing monitoring and evaluation to determine outcomes and impacts?
- Is the current communication method used by the CDT sustainable and effective?
- How can aspects of the Champion Leader role be taken up by other CDT members?
- How can you continue to informally or formally evaluate the new behaviour to make sure it is sustained?

Spreading CHOICE+ to other dining rooms:

- What members of the CDT can be engaged to support new dining rooms?
- What plan is in place to recruit new CDT members from team members, residents, family members, and volunteers in the new dining room? How can this be supported?
- What funding/resources are required to sustain CHOICE+ and spread to other dining rooms?

Recognizing and Rewarding Excellence

Changing mealtime practices and the culture of care takes time and is hard work. It is important to recognize the CDT and partners in the home for their efforts throughout the change process. While achieving a significant goal (e.g., a change that took six months to make) is a great time to celebrate, be sure to also acknowledge the smaller steps along the way that led to that big change. Congratulating a team member for their hard work during a huddle in front of their peers goes a long way to recognizing individual efforts and boosting morale amongst the group. Remember that incentives (e.g., thank you cards, candy, posters, awards) need to be meaningful to those who receive them.

For some ideas on [recognizing and rewarding excellence](#), refer to the Appendix.

Training New Team Members

Staff turnover can sometimes be quite high in residential living environments. There is a good chance that new team members, residents, family members, and volunteers will join the home after the CHOICE+ rollout has begun. It is important to make sure that anyone new to the home receives the same training as others who have been involved in CHOICE+ from the start. For new residents and families, make sure that they know what goals are being worked on in their dining room and give them an opportunity to share their feedback and ideas with you.

When training new team members:

- Have team members read through the introduction of this CHOICE+ e-learning Guidebook
- Review your CHOICE+ Guidelines for Working Together with new members
- Document the CHOICE+ goals as standard operating procedures, if appropriate
- Provide specific training activities that you have developed for new team members as part of their onboarding experience
- Encourage Mealtime Champions to support and mentor new team members



Summary and next steps

Congratulations! You've made it through the eight steps of making change using CHOICE+.

CHOICE+ is an ongoing journey. Changing the culture of care in the dining room takes significant time and commitment from all partners, but the effort is worth it. Research has shown that when a participatory model of shared decision-making is used to tailor CHOICE+ Principles to a dining room, improvements can be made and sustained^{2,13}.

We hope this guidebook has inspired you and provided practical strategies for supporting your team as you work to enhance the mealtime experience for residents in your home. Best of luck on your CHOICE+ journey!

Now that you have completed the three modules of the course, here are the next steps:

- Develop an Action Plan that identifies the PDCA steps to reach this goal.
- Monitor and evaluate the progress being made towards the specific goal.
- Determine if the plan has resulted in the desired outcome.
- Make changes to the initial plan (if necessary).
- Test new plans, as necessary, until the desired outcome has been achieved.
- Start on a new specific mealtime goal.
- Reinforce with the CDT and partners that CHOICE+ is an ongoing initiative.
- Recognize and reward team members for their exceptional contributions.
- Devise a plan for training new team members.

References

1. Ducak, K., Sweatman, G., & Keller, H. (2015). Dining culture change in long-term care homes: Transitioning to resident-centered and relational meals. *Annals of Long-Term Care*, 23(6), 28–36.
2. Keller, H., Valaitis, R., Laur, C. V., McNicholl, T., Xu, Y., Dubin, J. A., Curtis, L., Obiorah, S., Ray, S., Bernier, P., Gramlich, L., Stickles-White, M., Laporte, M., & Bell, J. (2018). Multi-site implementation of nutrition screening and diagnosis in medical care units: Success of the project More-2-Eat. *Clinical Nutrition*, 37(6), 2066–2075. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnu.2018.02.009>
3. Reimer, H. D., & Keller, H. H. (2009). Mealtimes in nursing homes: Striving for person-centered care. *Journal of Nutrition in Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 28(4), 327–347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639360903417066>
4. Kotter International. (2019). The 8-step process for leading change. Retrieved from: <https://www.kotterinc.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change>
5. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. (2016). The Knowledge to Action Process. Retrieved from: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29418.html#6>
6. Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (2019). Model for improvement. Retrieved from: <http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/default.aspx>
7. Mind Tools Content Team. (2023). PDCA (Plan Do Check Act). Retrieved from: <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.mindtools.com/as2l5i1/pdca-plan-do-check-act&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1704495212255989&usg=AOvVaw1C7Dvbh1WfuW8bkzxNo5w8>
8. Laur, C., Valaitis, R., Bell, J., & Keller, H. (2017). Changing nutrition care practices in hospital: A thematic analysis of hospital staff perspectives. *BMC Health Services Research*, 17(1), 498. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-017-2409-7>
9. Kaner, S. (2014). *Facilitator's guide to participatory decision-making* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
10. Michie, S., van Stralen, M. M., & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Science*, 6(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-6-42>.
11. Laur, C. V., Bell, H., Valaitis, R., Ray, S., & Keller, H. (2018). The Sustain and Spread Framework: Strategies for sustaining and spreading nutrition care improvements in acute care based on thematic analysis from the More-2-Eat study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 18, Article 930. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-3741-1>
12. Wu, S., Morrison, J., Dunn, H., Vucea, V., Iuglio, S., & Keller, H. (2018). Developmental evaluation of the CHOICE Program: A relationship-centred mealtime intervention for long-term care. *BMC Geriatrics*, 18, Article 277. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-018-0964-3>
13. Keller, H., Wu, S., Iraniparast, M., Trinca, V., Morrison-Koechl, J., & Awwad, S. (2021). Relationship-centred mealtime training program demonstrates efficacy to improve the dining environment in long-term care. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*, 22(9), 1933–1938. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamda.2020.11.008>

Appendix

Tips for Choosing a Dining Room for CHOICE+

Leadership Status

- Have there been any recent changes in leadership positions that might make it difficult to start CHOICE+ in this area?
- Consider positions like nursing and dietary leads.

Acceptance of Change

- Are there any key leaders/team members that might be resistant to making a change in this area?
- Consider the availability of resources, perceptions, workload, etc.

Communication Channels

- How good is communication in this home area?
- Consider how often the team meets, if there are meetings between shift changes, if there is a process for getting feedback from team members, etc.

Competing Priorities

- Are there any competing projects or programs in this area that might take priority over CHOICE+?
- Consider other change initiatives that are already happening, or any compliance issues that will need to be resolved first.

Past Projects

- Were there any challenges with past improvement projects or initiatives in this area?
- Consider if other projects were able to get off the ground, and if they were sustained.

CHOICE+ Mealtime Satisfaction Questionnaire for Residents

The following 14 questions ask you about your satisfaction with meals and mealtimes. Please CHECK ONE response for each question, and add comments if you would like to.

1. Are meals served at the right time of day for you?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

2. Do you recognize the foods on the menu?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

3. Are you offered foods that you do not like?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

4. Is there enough variety of foods to choose from?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

5. Is the food appealing?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

6. Do you like how the food tastes?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

7. Are foods served at the right temperature?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

8. Is the portion size right for you?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

9. Do you look forward to dining with your tablemates?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

10. Are you comfortable in the dining room?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Not satisfied

Comments:

11. Do you like the dining atmosphere?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not satisfied

Comments:

12. Do the dining staff treat you with respect?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not satisfied

Comments:

13. Are you happy with how meals are served?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not satisfied

Comments:

14. Overall, how satisfied are you with your mealtimes?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Not satisfied

Comments:

CHOICE+ Ideas for Building Awareness

These are just a few ideas—try to be creative and think of different ways to increase awareness of the need to improve the mealtime experience.

Announcement/Poster

- Write a short story to highlight CHOICE+ in the home newsletter, or make a poster to put up in common spaces like the lounge, hallway, elevator, etc.
- An example poster is provided below.

Team Member Memo

- Provide a memo for team members that outlines CHOICE+ and the principles to improve mealtimes.
- Put the memo in a communication binder or circulate it in other internal communications for team members.
- An example memo is provided below.

Team Member Huddle

- Introduce CHOICE+ during a team huddle.
- Discuss how the home selected this focus area.
- Explain that team members will be asked for input on what they think needs to change and what solutions might work.

Information Sessions

- Set up one or two meetings for residents, family members, and volunteers to let them know about CHOICE+.
- Note: It is important to have some face-to-face meetings since not everyone will see posters or read newsletters.

Other ideas include:

- Play the Mealtimes Matter video for team members: youtube.com/watch?v=wPfaQztS-mQ
- Encourage team members to read through the CHOICE+ information located in the [Introduction](#) of this guidebook.
- Hold information sessions for residents and family members to hear their thoughts on areas for improvement in the dining room, and to share information about CHOICE+.
- Share stories from residents, families, and volunteers about positive mealtime interactions. This could even be a hypothetical but real-life scenario of the dining area that highlights some challenges in the dining room.
- Hold a meeting for team members to discuss what improvements they think can be made at mealtimes. Take note of the feedback and let them know you're listening and understanding.
- Share any research findings that you are aware of (e.g., from presentations at conferences, articles in journals, webinars, etc.). This will help recognize that others in the sector are making improvements and how valuable it is for residents and team members at mealtimes.

CHOICE+ CDT Roles and Responsibilities

The CHOICE+ Dining Team

The CHOICE+ Dining Team (CDT) is a diverse group of people who take an active leadership role in their neighbourhood to implement CHOICE+. They do this by collaborating with the Champion Leader, advocating and supporting others with mealtime initiatives, and communicating relevant information to the rest of the home. The CDT is made up of team members, residents, family members, leadership and volunteers. One type of role is not more important than the other – each member has something important to contribute to mealtimes.

The CDT's role involves consulting team members, residents, family members and volunteers on what is working well and where improvements can be made. The CDT must communicate effectively and frequently with these partners, and help them identify priorities for improvement.

Responsibilities of the CDT

Share Ideas

Share ideas for solving problems and coming up with viable solutions. Be supportive, be respectful, and encourage one another to come up with and discuss ideas in order to work through difficult processes. Remember – everyone has a unique set of skills and knowledge that can contribute to enhancing mealtimes.

Plan for Change

Meet frequently and work through how to make improvements identified by partners. Remember that everyone on the CDT has a unique perspective that can help make the change sustainable. Use the Action Plan to record decisions on how to make improvements.

Touch Base

Get together a minimum of once per week in the beginning, then consider meeting once every two weeks. Use this time to reflect on what change efforts are going well and what needs to be modified. Touching base can take place in person during a huddle (e.g., Wednesdays during shift change), an informative conversation in the home area, and/or a note left in a communications binder. CDT members will spend different amounts of time in the dining room (volunteers versus care partners versus families), so it is important that everyone is kept in the loop about how mealtimes are progressing.

Track Progress

Be sure to understand where you started from and where you're going. Making change takes time and patience, and you will often find that what you thought would work at the beginning will need some tweaking along the way.

CHOICE+ CDT Roles and Responsibilities

Ask for Help

Seek help when necessary and in situations where a goal seems particularly challenging. If you are finding it difficult to carry out a task in relation to your Action Plan, then speak with your CDT to share the issue/problem so that you can work together to identify a solution.

Support Each Other

Remember - you're in this together. If what you're trying to achieve is more difficult than you thought, then it is your responsibility as a team to support one another as you work through the issues. Try to avoid placing blame on individuals and consider the situation from their perspective: Do you understand the role they play at meals? Do they understand yours? Why might someone be having a difficult time carrying out their mealtime roles? How can you provide them with more support?

CHOICE+ Guidelines for Working Together

- Be an active participant
- Listen to everyone's opinions
- Respect each other
 - If you disagree, discuss this in a meeting
 - Make decisions together
- Speak one at a time
- Stick to the topic
- Focus on the positives and what we can do
 - Consider what you could give up or compromise on to reach the goal
- Cooperate with each other
- Start and end meetings on time
- Be flexible with schedules
- Encourage other people to get involved!

CHOICE+ Memo Example

Memo: CHOICE+

What is CHOICE+?

CHOICE+ is designed to support relationship-centred dining in long-term care and improve the mealtime experience. Each letter of the CHOICE+ acronym stands for a core principle of relationship-centred dining:

Connecting

Honouring dignity

Offering support

Identify

Creating opportunities

Enjoyment

The objective of CHOICE+ is to create mealtimes that feel like home, where personal preferences are honoured and dignity is supported.

Why CHOICE+?

Most of us grow up with fond memories of time spent around the dinner table, whether it is a special occasion or a family gathering to discuss the day. But it's about more than just the food on the plate - it's the overall experience that makes it memorable. Social interactions, the dining environment, team member knowledge and skills to provide support, and choice and variety all affect the mealtime experience in long-term care and ultimately residents' quality of life.

Over the next several months, we will be working towards putting CHOICE+ Principles in [*name of dining room/home area*]. Stay tuned for how you can be involved and be part of making mealtimes the best they can be in our home.

Questions? Please contact:

[Contact information]

CHOICE+ Making the most of mealtimes

CHOICE+ is coming to

Starting in _____, _____ will begin CHOICE+.

CHOICE+ uses a relationship-centred approach to enhance mealtimes. Team members, residents, family members and volunteers will work together to identify ways to make the dining experience more enjoyable, supportive and welcoming for everyone!

Regular progress updates will be provided on

Have a Question? Get in Touch!
**If you would like to find out more about the CHOICE+,
contact our CHOICE+ Champion Leader at**

CHOICE+ Tips for Engaging Partners

Activity	Team Members	Residents	Family	Volunteers
Put a suggestion box in a common area	X	X	X	X
Write a formal letter/e-mail requesting input			X	X
Participate as a tablemate at a meal and take note of what needs to be improved	X		X	X
Host a CHOICE+ change forum to discuss potential improvements		X	X	X
Hold team huddles	X			
Other ideas:				

Remember! Once partners have voiced their opinions, it is important to follow up. People will lose interest in CHOICE+ if they don't think that change is being made or their comments are being heard and acknowledged.

Think about how the CDT can circle back to partners to keep them up to date on what is being worked on and why. For example, the CDT could make a poster or share a memo describing what progress has been made so far, results from questionnaires and checklists, and information on how to provide input on priorities. You may also need to communicate why some of the suggested improvements are not the focus at this time. This will help to build trust among everyone involved in the process of improving mealtimes.

CHOICE+ Team Member Mealtime Experience Questionnaire

The following 23 questions ask you about your satisfaction with mealtime. When answering these questions, think about your mealtime experience in general and not one meal in particular. Please CHECK ONE response for each question.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am able to make mealtimes enjoyable for residents.					
2. I have enough time to perform mealtime tasks carefully.					
3. I get support from other team members during mealtimes.					
4. I have time to talk with residents at mealtimes.					
5. Mealtimes give me an opportunity to get to know residents better.					
6. I feel comfortable talking socially with residents during mealtimes.					
7. I am able to perform all of my mealtime tasks.					
8. I am able to support residents to eat when they want.					
9. I almost always meet the food preferences of residents.					
10. Mealtimes are one of the best parts of my workday.					
11. When there is a challenge during mealtimes, our team comes together to solve it.					
12. I have enough time to provide assistance to residents who need help with eating.					
13. I know how to assist residents so that they can be as independent as possible at mealtimes.					

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. The dining room is comfortable and welcoming.					
15. It is easy for me to move around in the dining room.					
16. I am able to encourage residents to talk with each other at meals.					
17. I can support residents to eat their meal where they want (e.g., separate or smaller dining area).					
18. I make sure that residents feel respected at mealtimes.					
19. I can find respectful ways to reduce challenging or expressive behaviours at mealtime.					
20. I am satisfied with the mealtime experience in this home/ neighbourhood/unit.					
21. I feel rushed/overwhelmed during meal times.					
22. I offer residents food choices during meals.					
23. Management responds to my concerns about mealtimes.					

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

CHOICE+ Audit Template

The following are examples of types of audits that can be used to track new practices that are goals for implementation.

Example 1

New Practice	Date/Meal	Check
Dishwasher left off until the final course		Occured Did not occur
		Occured Did not occur
		Occured Did not occur

Example 2

New Practice	Date/Meal	Tally # of times occurred
Team members greet residents when they arrive or orient them to the meal		

Example 3

New Practice	Date/Meal	Rating (Check - 1 low 5 high)
Team members socially interact with residents		1 2 3 4 5
		1 2 3 4 5
		1 2 3 4 5

Sample Template for Tracking Improvement

Improvement: Reducing Use of Dishwasher During Meals

[illegible]

Sample: Mealtime Experience Improvement Tracking

Note: Adjust the table accordingly.

Details		
Response number	Date	Role of person who completed Mealtime Experience checklist

Connecting		
Residents socialize	Eye contact, smile, gentle touch	Encourage to stay in dining room
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Honouring Dignity			
Offered a clothing protector	Ask how we can assist	Offered a napkin	Ask if finished
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Offering Support					
Assist as soon as food arrives	Safe practices	1-1 assistance	Inform them what they're eating	Continuous eating assistance	Nonverbal cues respected
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Sample: Mealtime Experience Improvement Tracking

Identity			
Ask preferences	Try to find alternatives	Respect mealtime traditions	Find solutions for seating
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Creating opportunities			
Encourage residents to help with activities	Reassuring not to rush	Support to eat on their own	Engage residents in theme nights
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Enjoyment			
Focused on eating	Dining room clutter free	Noise is minimized	Received food in timely manner
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Sample: Mealtime Experience Improvement Tracking

Creating opportunities			
Encourage residents to help with activities	Reassuring not to rush	Support to eat on their own	Engage residents in theme nights
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Enjoyment			
Focused on eating	Dining room clutter-free	Noise is minimized	Received food in timely manner
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

Enjoyment (cont.)		
Team members calling out to team members	Minimize distracting noise	Seated before serving
Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely	Most of the time Sometimes Rarely

CHOICE+ Tips for Summarizing Information

Data from Questionnaires

1. Summarize the results for a questionnaire:
 - a) This can be done for each question on the questionnaire or a summed score, depending on the questionnaire
 - b) Count the number of people who filled it out
 - c) Calculate the average scores for each question (total across the individual responses and divide by the number who completed)
 - d) Calculate the average score and the summed score (if relevant)
2. Make note of meaningful information, for example:
 - a) What were the lowest-scoring items (i.e., areas for improvement)?
 - b) What were the highest scoring items (i.e., strengths)?
 - c) Number of questionnaires completed and partner roles, if asked
3. Prepare a short, written document for the CDT that summarizes this data.

Data from Comments and Suggestions

4. Gather all of the comments that were received from engaging with partners. Bring comments from suggestion boxes, print of emails, etc.
5. For comments that have more than one suggestion, rewrite each comment on individual pieces of paper. Put all the comments together in a table.
6. Read each comment and sort them into different categories based on the topic.
 - a) For example, “The noise from the dishwasher and food cart is distracting.” This comment could be categorized under a more general grouping of responses called “noise”.
7. Count the number of comments in each category. Write this total down for each category.
8. Prepare a short, written document that highlights the following:
 - a) Number of engagement sessions held
 - b) Type of partner groups that were involved (e.g., three coffee chats held with family)
 - c) Number of comments received in total
 - d) Number of comments received for each category; provide an example for each category (e.g., for the “noise” category: “food cart is noisy”)

CHOICE+ Tips for Discussing Findings

Now that the data has been summarized, it is time to discuss the findings with the CDT members.

Hold a CDT meeting to review high-level results in a systematic way to determine which parts of mealtimes are going well and which areas need more focus.

Summaries can be provided before the meeting to give members time to review them beforehand. Otherwise, they can be provided at the meeting – note that time will be required to review and go over the information.

At the CDT meeting, the Champion Leader should spend approximately 15-20 minutes presenting high-level results from the summaries.

Hold a brief discussion and ask CDT members the following questions:

- Was anything surprising?
- Was anything expected?

In addition to the summaries, if CDT members completed the Mealtime Practices Checklist and Dining Room Checklist, these could also be used to discuss areas for improvement. Ask the following questions:

- How did the summaries compare to your self-reflections on the Mealtime Practices Checklist and Dining Room checklists?
- How useful were the Mealtime Practices Checklist and Dining Room Checklist for helping you to reflect on your mealtime activities with residents?

Ask each CDT member to report one item from the checklists they do well and one area they could improve. Remind the CDT members that these checklists can be used as a starting point for prioritizing ideas and for developing an action plan.

Record key points from the discussion on a flipchart or whiteboard. You should now have a sense of which areas could use improvement. Consider the following questions to identify quick wins for change, which is often a good place to start.

- What would need to happen to improve in these areas? Is this something that is easy to do right now and will give a feeling of success? Is this within our power to change?

CHOICE+ Prioritizing: Creating a Top 10 List

All partners should have an opportunity to provide input into setting priorities for change. The following are suggestions on how to get input from the CDT members and other partners.

Getting Input from CDT Members

- Ask each member of the CDT to share their priorities verbally. Do this until there are at least 10 different priorities shared, or until everyone has had a turn to share. Note – If CDT members would prefer not to describe their priorities verbally, ask them to write one or two ideas on a piece of paper or index card.
- Write all of the priorities that were shared on a flip chart so everyone can see. Consider that some can be grouped into larger ideas (e.g., ‘reducing machine noise in the dining room’).
- If you end up with more than 10 priorities, carry out a vote:
- Provide each CDT member with 3-5 stickers.
- Ask each member to put the stickers beside their highest priorities on the flip chart.
- Alternatively, if there are only a few more priorities than 10, ask members to use only one sticky to identify their lowest priority (i.e., one that they would like to be removed).

Getting Input from Other Partners

The following are some ideas for involving partners in setting priorities for change. Be sure to provide sufficient time (e.g., two weeks) to allow for input.

Activity to Identify Priorities	Team Members	Residents	Family	Volunteers
Create a poster that lists the potential areas for improvement (partners can “vote” on the priorities using stickers)	X	X	X	X
Hold a “CHOICE+ Change Forum” to prioritize what residents, families, and volunteers think should change		X	X	X
Hold team huddles to discuss priorities	X			
Other ideas:				

Once the top 10 list has been prioritized, be sure to circle back and communicate the priorities to partners.

CHOICE+ Tips for Communicating Goals

The following are suggested ways to communicate the current goals of CHOICE+ that the CDT and partners will be working on to improve the mealtime experience.

Activity	Team Members	Residents	Family	Volunteers
Team huddles	X			
CHOICE+ Mealtime Goals Posters; Display the goals that have been identified by partners in a picture frame or as a poster somewhere near the dining area.	X	X	X	X
Written reminders or pictures at the point where the behaviour occurs	X			X
Communication book	X		X	X
Informal chats (one-on-one)	X			X
Reports	X			X
Newsletters	X	X	X	X
Other ideas:				

CHOICE+ Mealtime Goal Posters

CHOICE+ Mealtime Goals Posters can be displayed in the team member's area near the dining room. They serve as a daily reminder of the goals that your team has identified and will be working towards. An example of a poster is provided below.

Harvest Dining Room

CHOICE+ Goal

January and February



General Goal: We reduce noise in the Harvest Dining Area by waiting until after meals to use the dishwasher.

If you are interested in being part of the Choice+ team Dining Team, please talk to Kiyomi.

CHOICE+ Prioritizing: Creating a Top 10 List

General Goal: Improve social interaction among residents and team members.

Specific Goal: Improve social interaction among team members and residents who do not communicate verbally during eating assistance.

Focus of PDCA:

1. Raise team members' awareness that socializing with all residents is important for their quality of life and is also an expectation of the job.
2. Help team members feel less awkward when talking socially to residents. As PDCA cycles continue, check-in meetings with the CDT can be used to review what worked and what did not. The Action Plan is used to document what was done, what happened, how it went, and any adaptations needed for the next trial. Specific names of CDT members and others would be used in a typical plan to promote accountability as well as timelines.

Cycle 1

Term	Description
Plan	- The goal is reworded as an aspiration statement and put in a picture frame for use in the neighbourhood and in team member break rooms as a reminder of what they are working towards. - All team members complete the CHOICE+ Mealtime Checklist and reflect on their own practice. - A team huddle will be used to discuss connecting with residents who do not communicate verbally.
Do	- The CDT team develops the aspiration statement at the meeting, and the Mealtime Champions ask team members on their next shift if it is clear. The Champion Leader confirms the wording and gives it to the office to print. - Office staff makes copies and buys the picture frames by Monday, Sept 7. - Dining Champion posts the picture frames with the aspiration statement by Sept 9. - Champion Leader sets a meeting for Sept 5 to role-play with the mealtime champions on how to conduct the huddle. - Office staff prints off Mealtime Practices Connecting and Identity sheets for team members and provides these and envelopes to the team in the neighbourhood. - CHOICE+ Mealtime Checklist is provided to each team member at a huddle during the week of September 14, noting the importance of interacting with all residents in the dining room as a way of improving connection and a sense of belonging. Time is given for the staff to complete the checklist. They put their completed checklist in an envelope and seal it, putting on a code only they would know. Mealtime champions discuss with team members (in a huddle) strategies for communicating with residents who do not communicate with words.

Term	Description
Check	- Mealtime Champions ask their colleagues if they are aware of the aspiration statement and what they thought of the Mealtime Checklist. They report back the number who were not aware of either the checklist or the aspiration to the CDT. - Count the number of team member sealed envelopes turned in. Champion Leader tracks the number of sealed envelopes handed in and attendance at huddles for discussion of the Checklist and connecting with residents. It was noted that weekend staff were missed and only 60% of staff handed in their sealed envelopes.
Act	Plan revised to consider how to get all team members participating in Checklist self-reflection and huddle to discuss interactions and communicating with residents who do not communicate with words.

Cycle 2

Term	Description
Plan	- A Champion is scheduled to work a half-shift on the weekend to reach team members about the Mealtime Checklist and discuss on interacting and connecting. - During huddles on weekdays, Checklists are again passed around, and team members are asked to complete them, reminding them that this is totally anonymous. They provide a code only they know on the envelope. They are reminded that this is only being used by the team to track how many have completed the checklist as a way of ensuring everyone has reflected on their practice.
Do	- Champions host huddles on weekends and weekdays to promote completion of the checklists. - Mealtime champions complete huddles at each shift during the weekend of Oct 1.
Check	- Mealtime Champions and Champion Leader record which team members attended a huddle where checklists were handed out and discussions occurred on connecting with all residents and discussing strategies. - Count the number of team member sealed envelopes turned in.
Act	- This engagement worked in that 90% of team members were exposed to the huddle discussions and completed the checklists. - Team members are reminded that these envelopes are for their personal use and will be used to check in on their progress with the goal in one month.

Cycle 3

Term	Description
Plan	CDT believes a notice from management around meal timing should be made to the team, so that they feel comfortable socially chatting at meals with residents. A similar notice will be made for the newsletter to inform families and residents.
Do	- The management member of the CDT discusses this request with the general manager by October 30. - A letter is written to be put in the newsletter for family and in the communication book for team members, indicating that the team is encouraged to make mealtimes as social as possible and that this may slow down the meal service.
Check	- CDT confirms that the communication pieces have been developed and used by November 5. - The champion leader takes the opportunity to time meals; 2 of each meal during the week of October 31. - Champions ask the team members who are not interacting as much what their challenges are.
Act	- Champion leader reports that the mealtime has increased by 10 minutes from the initial data collection. - Food service members of CDT indicate that they can look at revising kitchen tasks if more time is needed at meals. - Champions identify that some team members are not sure what to say to residents who do not verbally communicate.

Cycle 4

Term	Description
Plan	- Examples of appropriate mealtime social interactions are developed by the CDT for use in role-playing and educating team members. - A role-play script is developed for Champion Leader and mealtime champions for use at huddles.
Do	- Champion Leader and mealtime champions conduct role playing the week of November 15 in the neighbourhood dining room. - A list of example conversation starters and types of communication considered appropriate for residents (e.g., smiling, light touch) is provided in the communication book before role-playing starts.
Check	- Team members exposed to role-play training are tracked. - Mealtime champions discuss at subsequent team huddles how it is going with talking with residents; gather team member feedback on their comfort.
Act	All team members took part in the role-play and reported enjoying the experience. It was noted by team members in the huddles that tables which only include persons requiring assistance are more challenging for social interaction and team members wondered if the CDT could look at table arrangements and spread out those who need assistance with other residents who need some but not total assistance.

Note: Add new cycles as required.

CHOICE+ COM-B Discussion Questions

The following are questions to consider for each factor that influences behaviour.

Knowing How (Capability):

- Do team members know how to do [the desired behaviour]?
- If they don't know how to do [the desired behaviour], what do they need to learn? (skill vs. knowledge)?

Making it Easy (Opportunity):

- What could we change in the dining room to make [the desired behaviour] happen?
- What would help make it easier to do [the desired behaviour]?
- Is it the norm for team members to do [the current behaviour]? Why is it the norm?

Understanding Why (Motivation):

- Do team members, the neighbourhood, or the home value something more than [the desired behaviour]?
- What is motivating [the current behaviour]?
- What do team members value that is aligned with the goal of [the desired behaviour]?
- Who is likely to resist [the desired behaviour]? Why? What might help them to adopt it?

CHOICE+ Tips for Influencing Behaviour

Use the following tips to help influence behaviour.

Enabler	Ask Yourself	How to Influence Behaviour
Knowing How (Capability)	• Do you know how to do the behaviour/ activity?	• Provide training. Show team members how to do the behaviour; build skill. • Provide education. Explain what the new behaviour is, why it is important to do it, and what is expected.
Making it Easy (Opportunity)	• What will make it easy to do the new behaviour/ activity?	• Ensure equipment is available (e.g., spatula for scraping dishes). • Use cues or reminders to nudge the team member to conduct the behaviour. • Change the environment to make it easier to do the behaviour (e.g., consider how teamwork can be done at meals to promote efficient meal service that is not chaotic). • Use rules or policy to make a new behaviour the "norm". • Team members succeeding at the new behaviour can inspire others to change.

Enabler	Ask Yourself	How to Influence Behaviour
Understanding Why (Motivation)	Do you want to do the new behaviour/activity?	- Persuade team members that the change is worthwhile; provide an example to inspire. - Provide incentives for the behaviour. - How would they feel if this was them and a team member was interacting in this way? - Make it easy to “do the right thing”. - Recognize and acknowledge when they are doing the new behaviour. - Create positive emotions for doing the new behaviour.

CHOICE+ Action Plan Worksheet

Action	Description
CHOICE Principle & General goal:	Which of the CHOICE+ Principles are we trying to put into practice? What do we want to see in the dining room?
Specific Mealtime Goal:	What is the identified goal we are trying to achieve?
What actions need to happen for us to reach our goal? The Plan	List the specific actions required to achieve the goal.
Who will do what and when? The Do	List the specific steps required and who will be doing them.
What will you look at or study to see if it is working? The Check	Identify how the CDT will gather information to determine if the actions are working.
What needs to change to reach the goal? The Act	What new steps will you take to meet the goal?
Key dates	List key dates and activities to be completed.

CHOICE+ Action Plan Example

Action	Description
CHOICE Principle & General goal:	Connecting, Enjoyment Extraneous noise needs to be reduced in the dining room to provide an opportunity for social interaction.
Specific Mealttime Goal:	Team members will do dish clearing and med provision quietly to not disrupt the meal.
What changes need to happen for us to reach our goal?	1. The med cart needs to be moved down the hall so that drawer noise and crushing of meds are not distracting. 2. The servery well covers are metal and cause a lot of noise when moved. 3. The dish cleaning cart is noisy when metal utensils are used on the dishes.
Who will do what and when?	1. Katie (Champion Leader) will speak to the RPNs and RNs about the placement of the med cart and if it can be moved down the hall. 2. Marg (RPN, Mealttime Champion) will identify what a less noisy pill crusher will cost and report back to the team. 3. May (FSM, Mealttime Champion) will determine if plastic well covers for the server are an option. 4. May will purchase two plastic spatulas for use in the dish-clearing area. 5. Jen and Josie (Mealttime Champions) will discuss with the team if the dish clearing centre can be moved to the hall and outside of the dining room. The team will consider if a different kind of cart is needed to help with storing dishes and reducing dish clattering. 6. Jen and Josie will conduct huddles with team members on reducing noise from the med cart, servery and dish clearing, as well as the importance of reducing all extraneous noise. 7. A mealttime goal poster will be posted outside the dining room for this goal. 8. Team members and volunteers will discuss the importance of minimizing extraneous noise at huddles in October. 9. Mealttime Champions will provide reminders at the beginning of meals. 10. FSM, Champion Leader, and Mealttime Champion will acknowledge team members who are doing a great job of reducing noise.

Action	Description
What will you look at or study to see if it is working?	1. Team members will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire after meal service on their perception of the noise level before and after these changes have been implemented. 2. May will do a random walk-through of meals to see what the extraneous noise is like.
What needs to change to reach the goal?	Based on the above information gathering
Key dates	• Team member survey September 15 • Huddle discussions 1/shift for week of October 1 • Posting of mealtime goal, and spatulas in place for October 1 • Report back from other activities (e.g., moving med cart, dish cart, plastic well covers, and noiseless med crusher costs) at CDT meeting on October 15

Sustaining CHOICE+

Action	Why?	How?
Maintain the new routine	Effort is needed to ensure that new processes work and team members carry out new mealtime activities.	- Keep CDT meetings (less frequent). - Renew CDT as required. - Build in accountability for new processes or activities (e.g., performance reviews, Standard Operating Procedure, etc.).
Engage new team members and management	Turnover is common among team members, residents, volunteers, and management. Plan for this reality.	- Use CHOICE+ awareness and engagement resources. - Encourage the Champion Leader to meet with the new management. - Encourage Mealtime Champions to meet with new team members/volunteers. - Develop a plan for onboarding new team members and volunteers during orientation. - See “Ideas for Training New Team Members”
Build intrinsic motivation	Teams with intrinsic motivation continue to strive to enhance the mealtime experience. They continue to fuel the fire for change and improvement.	- Find incidents of success with mealtimes that can be shared as stories with the team. - Showcase excellence, even submit your experience with CHOICE+ at your home to a conference. - Make CHOICE+ Principles a key feature for communicating to new residents and families. - Continue to involve partners in CDT decisions and improvements.
Continue to monitor and evaluate	Through PDSA cycles and use of informal and formal monitoring and evaluation techniques, you have realized the importance of collecting data to make a change.	- Develop a more formalized evaluation from the informal data collection done during PDCA. - Consider how auditing of expected practices can be continued on an ongoing basis. - Develop a schedule for monitoring and evaluation post making discrete improvements in dining. - Use this data to reinforce practice by sharing with team members.

Spreading CHOICE+

Action	Why?	How?
Be responsive to opportunities	New opportunities may arise for spreading CHOICE+. This may be as simple as new family members in a home area raising concerns about a mealtime environment, or funding becoming available for new quality initiatives. Consider how to capitalize on these opportunities.	- As opportunities arise, consider if and how CHOICE+ might be a good fit. - When home areas or other homes in your chain indicate interest, consider this as an opportunity and “readiness” to take on CHOICE+. - Opportunity can also result in renewal of the CDT and Champion Leaders.
Consider local context and readiness	CHOICE+ Principles will look different in each neighbourhood; a “cookie-cutter” approach to applying improvements will not result in sustained change in the new area.	- The new area/home needs to work through CHOICE+ like your first dining room - Some components may be transferable (e.g., standard operating procedures), but others will not. - Educate the CDT and management that this is a neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood initiative - Take it slow; do the steps of individual PDCA designed for this dining room - Readiness is expressed as interest by teams that are strong and stable
Make it easy to spread	Now that you have gone through CHOICE+ in one neighbourhood, you have greater experience knowing how to make change, what communication techniques worked, etc. Build on this learning with new home areas/homes.	- Consider if Champion Leader(s) can support new areas. - Be upfront with what worked and didn't with new CDT members. - New systems (e.g., team scheduling, forms, monitoring, and evaluation techniques) may be readily spread.
Be and stay visible	Visibility will keep CHOICE+ alive and support sustaining and spreading.	- Develop a new CDT for new home areas and continue with the CDT in the original home area. - Continue communicating (e.g., newsletters) with all partners to keep them aware of CHOICE+ and improvements happening at mealtimes; renew/refresh reminders and other visual cues that support the behaviours that are now the norm; keep up with monitoring and evaluating, and report findings back to the neighbourhood.

Action	Why?	How?
Maintaining roles and supporting new champions	The CDT, Champion Leader(s) and mealtime champions were vital roles in the CHOICE+ initiative. Consider how these roles can be maintained and where required new champions can be brought into the CDT.	- Develop and update role descriptions for members of the CDT. - Demonstrate the value of these roles to team members and the home. - Provide incentives for these leaders (e.g., trip to a conference to present results; picture and write up in the corporate newsletter etc.). - Be on the lookout for passionate volunteers who want to take on a role.

CHOICE+ Ideas for Rewarding Excellence

The following are some ideas for recognizing those who have made significant contributions to CHOICE+.

Group	Small Incentives	Significant Incentives
Team members and volunteers	- Thank you note - Verbal praise, individually or at a team huddle - Mealtime champion acknowledging a new behaviour after the meal	- Newsletter item - Team member of the month - CHOICE+ button - Cupcakes to celebrate a specific goal
Mealtime Champions	- Thank you note - Special apron - Opportunity to lead huddles and other team activities - Paid time to attend CHOICE+ meetings	- Attend a conference - Paid day off - Small gift
CHOICE+ Dining Team	- Provide refreshments at meetings - Thank you note - Acknowledgment at a home meeting	- Attend a conference - Write up in the corporate newsletter - Framed Certificate





CHOICE

Making the most of mealtimes



Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging
250 Laurelwood Drive, Waterloo ON
info@the-ria.ca | the-ria.ca | 519.904.0660
Charitable Registration # 841471212 RR0001