



You Say Your Community is Person-Centered, But What About This?

By Susan Saldibar

Every so often, I'll randomly Google assisted living and memory care communities, curious as to how they are marketing themselves. Most talk about their person-centered care and the importance of treating residents as vital individuals, with more life yet to live. To me, that's encouraging for an industry still struggling to shake off age-old perceptions of dreary buildings with one-size-fits-all care plans.

Person-centered care is a huge step forward. The individual is being considered in almost all areas of care. Likes and dislikes are carefully noted (no more bingo force-feeding). But what about the use of technology? For example, can safety and alert technology be both effective and person-centered? This is an area I've learned more about talking with Jacquie Brennan, Vice President of [Vigil Health Solutions](#), a Senior Housing Forum partner. Unlike other aspects of care, safety still tends to be looked at as an all-or-nothing type of application. You install something, check a box that you have it, and move on.

The Person-Centered Philosophy

Here's what Vigil does, however, that I think fits amazingly well into the person-centered philosophy:

- **Treating the resident as a unique individual:** Every resident has his or own patterns when it comes to sleeping, using the bathroom, and their activity levels in their rooms. Vigil Health uses sophisticated sensor information which can be analyzed and turned into unique maps of their normal movement. As an example, if Mrs. Smith gets up in the night and doesn't go back to bed within her typical amount of time, staff can be alerted. The system is customized for each individual resident depending on his or her unique needs.
- **Respecting the resident's privacy:** Many alert systems use surveillance cameras in rooms to "watch" residents as they move about. Vigil believes that sensors are much more reliable and far less intrusive. I know I wouldn't want my every move captured on camera. Unless you're doing your own selfie video, there is nothing about in-room cameras that are, in my opinion, person-centered.
- **Providing the resident with immediate assistance:** Above all, of course, is the need to keep residents safe and respond quickly to any issues. Once again, Vigil's track record speaks for itself. They are able to help communities reduce their response times dramatically. Their sophisticated reporting helps staff identify movements and issues that can lead up to incidents.

All this is heartening and helping communities to move forward and away from the days of point-blank surveillance, buzzers going off, cameras being activated, locks clicking and lights blinking.

Safety technologies, such as Vigil, are true game changers with a message we can all get behind. Yes, we can keep resident safe. Yes, we can respond quickly to a fall and even possibly prevent it. And, yes, we can do all this, while respecting residents' privacy and treating them as adults, not toddlers. That's about as person-centered as you can get. And it's a positive step forward for the industry.



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