ISSUE 02

The NSCWL Monthly

October 2026

October is Residents' Rights Month



Choice. Dignity. Connection.

Welcome to The NSCWL Monthly!

This month's issue is about the everyday parts of senior care that can easily get overlooked. Things like giving someone a real choice, listening when they say no, helping without taking over, and remembering that meals, routines, and small interactions can mean more than we realize.

A lot of good care happens in ordinary moments. It is not always a big intervention, a major decision, or something that gets written into a care plan. Sometimes it is noticing that someone prefers to sit in the same chair at lunch. Sometimes it is asking before helping. Sometimes it is giving a person a little more time to do something on their own instead of stepping in too quickly.

Those things may seem small, but they are often the things that help care feel personal. They can protect independence, preserve dignity, and remind someone that they are still an individual with their own preferences, routines, and way of doing things.

That is really what this issue is about. Not making care complicated, but paying closer attention to the person in front of us and remembering that the little things are often where respect shows up most.

With Care,
Leah Adkins

Inside This Issue:

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ACTIVITIES & CONNECTION

MORE THAN A MEAL

Mealtimes are about much more than nutrition. Food can carry memories, culture, routine, comfort, and identity. In senior care, a meaningful dining experience starts with knowing the person, not simply serving the tray.

Small choices matter: Where would you like to sit? Would you like coffee or tea? Is there a favorite family recipe or familiar food that brings comfort? Even when diets must be modified for safety, residents should still be included in decisions whenever possible.





CONNECTION AT THE TABLE

A shared meal can become a powerful social activity. Invite conversation, use seasonal table décor, play familiar music, or ask residents about foods they remember from childhood.

The goal is not to make every meal elaborate. It is to make the person feel seen.

Try this: Ask, “What meal always felt like home to you?”
Senior-care takeaway: Choice at mealtime supports dignity, independence, and quality of life. When someone cannot communicate easily, learn their routines, involve family when appropriate, and watch for nonverbal preferences.

WHEN "NO" IS THE ANSWER

A resident has the right to make choices about daily life and care. That includes the right to refuse. A "no" may mean no to a shower right now, no to an activity, no to a particular food, or no to going to bed on someone else's schedule.

The better question is often: Why? Is the person tired, afraid, uncomfortable, embarrassed, in pain, confused, or simply expressing a preference?

Respecting refusal does not mean ignoring safety. Staff can explain risks, offer alternatives, return later, involve the appropriate care team, and document concerns. The goal is to balance safety with autonomy not to turn care into a power struggle.

TRY THIS APPROACH

- Pause instead of pushing.
- Offer two simple choices.
- Ask what would make the person more comfortable.
- Try again at a different time.
- Look for pain, fear, fatigue, or communication barriers.

Dignity lives in the little decisions. When residents are included in those decisions, care becomes more person-centered and more respectful.

Ask Before You Help

Helping too quickly can sometimes take away an older adult's chance to do something for themselves. Even when assistance is well-intended, pause before stepping in.

Ask, "Would you like some help?" or "What part would you like me to help with?" Someone may need extra time, a small cue, or help with only one step.

Supporting independence does not mean leaving someone to struggle. It means giving the right amount of help while allowing the person to remain involved in their own care. Care takeaway: When it is safe, do with someone rather than automatically doing for them.

CARE & EDUCATION

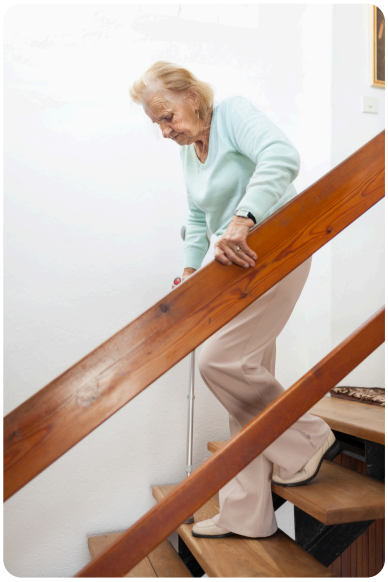
PHYSICAL THERAPY & INDEPENDENCE

Physical therapy can help older adults maintain or regain strength, balance, mobility, and confidence after illness, injury, surgery, or a decline in function. The goal is not simply “exercise.” It is helping someone safely do more of the things that matter in everyday life. That may mean walking to the dining room, transferring more safely, getting in and out of bed, climbing a step, or reducing fall risk. Progress can be gradual, but even small gains may support greater independence.

HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP

Ask what the therapy goals are and what can safely be practiced between sessions. Encourage effort without taking over. Celebrate progress that might look “small” but means more freedom to the person doing the work.

A good care plan should connect therapy goals to the person’s real routines, preferences, and priorities.





HEARING CHANGES & COMMUNICATION

Hearing loss is common with age, but it can sometimes look like confusion, withdrawal, or lack of interest. A person may miss parts of a conversation, answer incorrectly, or stop participating because following along has become frustrating.

Simple changes can help: face the person when speaking, reduce background noise, speak clearly without shouting, and give them time to respond.
Care takeaway: Before assuming someone is confused or “not listening,” consider whether they may simply be having trouble hearing.

The Senior Spark

A LITTLE FUN. A LOT OF GOOD.

Today's Spark

AUTUMN AT THE TABLE

Create a simple fall conversation basket with an apple, cinnamon stick, fabric leaf, recipe card, or old kitchen utensil. Invite the person to pick one item and share a memory connected to it.

Word Search

Find the words listed below. They can be found across, down, or diagonally (forward or backward).

Resident Rights

K	E	N	O	I	T	A	L	O	S	I	M	O	R	F	M	O	D	E	E	R	F	Y	T
S	T	N	I	A	R	T	S	E	R	M	O	R	F	M	O	D	E	E	R	F	X	J	D
S	G	E	O	C	V	T	D	X	U	S	Z	T	K	T	E	U	W	B	P	H	M	Y	S
N	I	Y	F	I	L	E	G	R	I	E	V	A	N	C	E	S	X	U	E	C	N	L	D
O	V	M	T	J	F	T	W	D	J	T	Q	E	D	I	G	N	I	T	Y	P	L	Q	F
I	P	X	M	R	I	I	E	E	L	X	M	W	N	N	L	F	M	I	F	A	S	N	T
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R	H	J	U	J	T	B	B	E	H	W	S	Z	I	I	B	J	H	V	D	W	S	R	U
P	E	A	M	C	Q	D	M	G	J	N	M	E	M	T	V	C	D	A	M	Q	U	P	D
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L	S	E	I	L	I	I	N	F	O	R	M	A	T	I	O	N	O	C	T	P	E	X	C
W	R	P	N	V	I	Y	M	Y	G	J	P	L	G	H	X	C	E	U	A	C	L	M	S

Word Bank

Freedom from Restraints	Freedom from Isolation	Transfer or Discharge
Send and Receive Mail	Abuse and Neglect	Refuse Treatment
Schedule routine	Confidentiality	File Grievances
Phone calls	Possessions	Information
Activities	Financial	Visitors
Choices	Privacy	Dignity
Rights		

Did You Know?

Smell and taste can be powerful memory cues. Familiar seasonal foods and scents may spark stories even when other memories are harder to reach.

Small gains can mean more independence. Improved strength and balance may make everyday tasks like walking, standing, or transferring easier and safer.

Connection can happen in ordinary moments. A shared meal, familiar song, favorite object, or a few unhurried minutes of conversation can create meaningful connection.

Reminisce & Reflect

Ask:

- What did fall look like where you grew up?
- Did your family preserve or can food?
- What was always on the table at Thanksgiving?
- Did you rake leaves, harvest crops, or visit a pumpkin patch?

Write down one story you hear. Those little memories become family history.

Connection does not have to be complicated. One object, one question, and a few unhurried minutes can be enough.

Print an extra copy and share The Senior Spark with a senior you love.

Navigating Steps of Hope

IN THE COMMUNITY



Gerry and Leah

Volunteering with Meals on Wheels has reminded me that care is about more than completing a task. Every person has their own preferences, routines, personality,and need for independence.

That matters everywhere at home, in a hospital, in assisted living, in long-term care, and in family caregiving. Good care is not only about what we do for someone, but how we make them feel while we are doing it. Behind every chart, room number, care plan, or delivery route is a person. Sometimes compassion is as simple as showing up, listening, noticing the little things, and treating people like they matter.

If you've ever thought about delivering Meals on Wheels, I highly recommend it. Contact RSVP at 580-237-1447 to learn how you can get involved. It doesn't take much time, but the experience can mean a lot to the people you serve and to you, too.



WALK WITH PURPOSE

This October, Navigating Senior Care with Leah is participating in the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's in Enid as Navigating Steps of Hope.
The walk is about more than a single event. It is a visible reminder that families living with Alzheimer's and other dementias need support, education, connection, and a community that keeps showing up.

If dementia has touched your family, your story matters. You are not alone in learning how to navigate the changes, questions, grief, caregiving decisions, and moments of connection that come with it.



Let's Talk Senior Care

Have a question about senior care, dementia, activity ideas, resident rights, care options, or what to do next? Send your question to NSCWL.
Your question may inspire a future issue of The NSCWL Monthly.

How to stay connected:

WWW.NAVIGATINGSENIORCAREWITHLEAH.COM

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Thank you for reading!