

Onboarding Program



Mentor's Guide

Introduction

This guide has been developed to help mentors in their roles with new employees. As a mentor, you have been selected by your supervisor as a high-performing and trusted employee to help mentor new employees when they join our team. We want to help you be effective and successful in this role. Ideally, mentors will:

- Help new employees feel welcome and reduce their anxiety as they begin this new job.
- Project a positive perception of The Cottages and the new employee's team.
- Help new employees understand the relationship between their job duties and The Cottages' mission statement.
- Help create a bond between the new employee and The Cottages.
- Help ensure the new employee understands the culture, policies, procedures, and practices of The Cottages.
- Support new employees during their first year of employment.

By bringing new employees into our team in this way, they are much more likely to:

- Be more successful and satisfied in their jobs.
- Be able to quickly contribute to the success of their work.
- More quickly become a part of the culture of The Cottages.
- Last longer in their job and enjoy a longer tenure at the Cottages.
- Experience less "burn out" in their job.

In essence, you get to be a part of helping someone be happier and more productive in the new job, resulting in a great work environment and a happy, healthy living condition for our residents.

If you have any questions regarding your role as a mentor for new employee orientation and onboarding, please contact your administrator or Human Resources.

Role of the Human Resources

Human Resources plays a vital role in building a strong foundation for new employees and presents a positive effect on their productivity, longevity, and morale. This includes ensuring a successful transition from the first day of employment through the employee's entire career with The Cottages. Human Resources processes the employee's required documents, such as new hire paperwork and benefits. Human Resource partners with the Supervisors and Mentors to follow up and coordinate new employee onboarding.

Orientation vs Onboarding

Orientation may involve review and completion of necessary new hire paperwork, employee handbook, job description, initial training, and familiarizing the employee with The Cottages' structure, mission, and policies.

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Onboarding is a much more comprehensive approach that starts before orientation and extends well beyond the first few days. In fact, the onboarding process will extend throughout the employee's first year of employment.

Onboarding is the process of bringing new employees into The Cottages and providing them with the tools, resources, training, and knowledge to become engaged, successful, and productive.

Why Onboarding

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, new employees decide within the first 30 days whether they feel welcome in their new job. Some employees leave their job because of a poor or non-existent onboarding program or a disastrous first experience. In addition, research by Gallup has shown that engaged employees are more productive employees. Gallup's findings suggest that engaged employees are more profitable, more customer-focused, safer, and more likely to withstand temptations to leave.

Employees arrive at their new jobs excited and engaged. As their mentor, you have the opportunity to channel that energy toward success by helping them become a part of the team. Onboarding will help you do that.

Effective employee onboarding will serve several purposes:

- The employees feel welcome, comfortable, prepared, and supported.
- These feelings increase the new employees' ability to make an impact and be productive within their role, provide excellent resident care in a positive atmosphere, both immediately and over time.
- The employee success leads to satisfaction and retention.

While onboarding is a long process, the first 90 days are critical. *Let's get started!*

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is someone who partners with a new employee during the first six months of employment to offer advice, encouragement, and guidance.

As a mentor, you have been selected by your administrator as an employee with high standards and strong people skills. You know how to perform the job of a caregiver well, and more importantly, you regularly demonstrate our company's mission statement "We Treat People Right" as you perform your job duties. You can be a source of advice and encouragement to a new employee, helping to steer the new employee in the right direction as well as help create a positive and productive work environment. Part of the role with the new employee is to create a comfortable environment in which the employee can ask and receive information from you about The Cottages' culture, including those everyday procedures and policies, and to help explain how things work.

A major goal for you as a mentor is to establish a sense of belonging for the new employee.

With an effective mentor, each new employee will quickly become a contributing member of our team.

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Role of the Mentor

Your role as a mentor is to help new employees understand what is expected of them and to teach them the best practices to ensure that they will succeed.

An important point to remember is that your role is not meant to be a substitute for the employee's supervisor (Administrator, Assistant Administrator, or House Manager).

You may be able to help the employee work through discussions they would like to have with the supervisor, but it is not your job to have those discussions yourself. Topics such as conditions of employment, work assignments, job performance, time and attendance, career opportunities, training, etc., must be discussions that are held between the employee and the supervisor. If you get specific questions about these areas, please direct the employee to the supervisor. A great mentor, however, offers positive advice in these areas, thus lessening the need for correction from the supervisor.

Here is a list of your responsibilities and tips as a mentor, as well as possible expectations the new employee may have.

Mentor Responsibilities

1. **Meet and greet:** When possible, meet the new employee on the first day and plan to spend a few minutes together to get to know each other a little bit. If it is not possible to meet on the first day, be sure that you are able to meet within the first two to three days of employment. Explain your role as mentor, and let the new employee know that you are dedicated to helping her/him become successful in the new job and to become a vital part of the team. You will be available to the new employee often during the first 90 days and you will continue to mentor the new employee through the first six months.
2. **Create a welcoming environment:** Work together with your administrator on various ways to create a welcoming environment for the new employee. Here are some ideas on how to do just that.
 - **Make the employee feel welcome.** At the next scheduled staff meeting, be sure to introduce and welcome the new employee. Then use some of the Get-To-Know-Me questions (see page ____) to assist the employee in having a fun, unintimidating conversation with the rest of the group.
 - **Establish a “New Employee Discussion Group”.** ***OPTIONAL*** Schedule a time for new employees to get together with you or have another person facilitate the discussion. Ask new employees to discuss their experiences, identify successes, describe moments of pride, express concern, ask questions, etc.
 - **After 30 days of employment, write a personalized note to the employee, expressing your appreciation for the new employee and extend another welcome to the team.**
 - **Think of your own idea.** Ask your team for ideas about what would have made them feel more welcome on their first day. Then involve them in creating the experience for the new employee.

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3. **Be a tour guide:** Give a tour of the building(s) where the employee will be working and make introductions. This is especially important on the first day.
 - a. Show where equipment is and how to use it (e.g., telephones, printers, etc.).
 - b. Show where the restroom is and where to eat meals.
 - c. Introduce the new employee to other staff and explain their roles.
 - d. Explain the process on how to communicate with the administrator and other staff, especially in the instances when they will not be working the same shift(s) as the new employee.
4. **Provide information:** Be an informational resource for the new employee on policies, procedures, work rules, etc.
 - a. Provide your contact information so you can be reached for questions.
 - b. Let the new employee know who to call in case of an emergency.
 - c. Set up regular meetings to continue to have discussions with the new employee.
5. **Offer insight and feedback:** Provide insight, constructive feedback, and information that supports the new employee's involvement in our team.
6. **Training support:** If appropriate (and requested by the administrator), assist in training the new employee.
7. **Resource support:** Identify resources to help the new employee, such as drug handbook, evacuation and emergency preparedness, instructions on how to lift and/or turn resident, what to do when a resident falls, etc.
8. **Individualized Success Plan:** Attend the Individualized Success Plan meetings with the new employee and the administrator. These meetings will be held at the 30, 60, and 90-day mark of employment.

What a New Employee May Expect from a Mentor

1. Advice, guidance, encouragement, and a positive attitude.
2. Open and honest communication, especially if feedback is requested or needed.
3. Help in understanding and promoting the culture of The Cottages.
4. Help in understanding and promoting how to get things done.
5. Time management – how to balance multiple tasks.
6. Assistance in building relationships with the team, residents, resident family members, vendors, hospice, home health, etc. It starts with a “hello” and an introduction.
7. Insight into how to make relationships with others effective and productive.
8. In general, employees want you to share with them what they need to know.

Tips for Mentors

1. Don't worry about being perceived as the expert. Your experience is important to the new employee. At the same time, you don't have to have all the answers.
2. Be patient and positive. It takes time to develop a mentor relationship. Don't try to cover everything right away. Allow the employee enough time to learn and grow.
3. Ask the new employee what is their preferred style or method of communication. (Examples: Do they learn better using visual or auditory methods? Do they prefer to communicate via phone call or text?) Realize and respect that the new employee may have a different style from your own.
4. **Remember that listening may be more important than giving advice in some instances.**

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5. Try not to be judgmental and be aware of your own biases and prejudgments. Be careful not to draw conclusions without exploring why someone feels or acts the way they do. Remember there is more than one side to a story. When the new employee comes to you with an issue or complaint, this is the time to listen and ask questions. Many times, your questions can help the employee solve their own issues and gain confidence in doing so. Here are some examples of questions that may help:
 - a. What is the hardest or most challenging part of this for you?
 - b. What do you want to achieve? Or what is the desired outcome?
 - c. What are the possibilities? If it were up to you, what would you do?
 - d. What are your options?
 - e. Is there another way you can view this situation?
 - f. What seems to be the main obstacle?
 - g. What actions have you taken on this issue so far? What were the effects of the actions?
 - h. If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently?
 - i. Where do we go from here? What will you do next?
 - j. Who needs to know pertinent information, and who should you communicate with?
 - k. What support do you need?
6. In the event that the new employee has setbacks, don't take it personally. You can't always ensure the success of a new employee, but you can help the new employee understand the setback and see it as a valuable learning experience. You can help the employee understand the mistake, help them identify what went wrong, and help to create a plan so that it doesn't happen again.
7. Keep and demonstrate a positive attitude! ☺

Remember when...

Before you begin mentoring a new employee, take a few minutes to remember when...

Do you remember what it was like on your first day of work? We often forget what it's like not to know what we know now. So, take a little time and think back to that first day at The Cottages for you. As you think about it, consider these questions:

- How did you feel walking into the building on that first day? Were you excited? Nervous? Overwhelmed?
- How did you feel about the paperwork you had to complete?
- What was it like meeting all the new people? Your boss? Co-workers? Residents?
- How did you figure out where to go for what you needed?
- Was everything ready for your arrival?
- What did you do for lunch that day?
- How did you feel at the end of your first day?

By taking the time to answer these questions, you will remember what it was like when you were new. It will help you empathize with new employees and show them patience and compassion as you help them integrate into their new job and as part of our team.



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Thank you!

Thank you for your dedication to The Cottages, our residents and our team. It is people like you who make The Cottages such a wonderful place to work. You are an appreciated and valuable part of our team. Thank you for being willing to mentor a new colleague in their journey to also become a valued team member!

If you have any questions about any aspect of the onboarding process, please contact your administrator or Human Resources.