



Respect | Safety | Dignity | Quality of Life

LEADERSHIP ROUNDING

listening and leading with purpose

*Leading*Age®
Minnesota

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This toolkit is designed for the site leader to use with direct-line staff across the entire organization.

WHAT'S INSIDE...



**Preparation
Checklist**



**Leadership
Rounding Log**



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Report**



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Resources**



WHY LEADERSHIP ROUNDING

In the fast-paced environment of aging services, leaders in care centers, assisted living, memory care, home care and adult day may find themselves one step removed from the day-to-day work that staff are doing on the front lines of your organization.

With such an intense focus on improving clinical and operational outcomes, you may feel siloed from the most important aspects of your mission – building relationships, creating trust, and ensuring safe and inclusive environments for residents, clients, families and your staff team.

What can you do as a leader to provide an environment where staff feel connected, are engaged in their work, and know they can speak up and make a difference?

Leadership Rounding creates an integral connection between you and those most responsible – each day – for the safe, quality care and services you provide.

The best part of leadership rounding? It doesn't require new infrastructure, new technology or new staff. It simply requires you -- the leader -- dedicating time each week to focus on some of the most important and rewarding work you will do. Through Leadership Rounding, you will quickly move beyond just getting a pulse on what is happening in your organization to a more connected, engaged and safer workplace.



DAN JOHNSON
President & CEO
Catholic Eldercare

“To achieve our mission in Safe Care for Seniors, we – as leaders – must first create a safe environment for people to speak up. They must know that we will listen without blame and act on their concerns in a timely fashion. Leadership Rounding helps build trust and relationships, and supports the change required to become an organization that builds on its achievements and learns from its mistakes.”

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP ROUNDING?

What do staff most desire in a leader?

Approachability.

They want to know that you know them, understand their work, recognize the tools, equipment and systems that help them do their work well, and appreciate them for what they do.

That's the purpose of Leadership Rounding! It's a proven strategy that is accomplished by proactively and purposefully engaging all staff in your organization -- listening to them, communicating with them and supporting them.

A feedback loop between you and your staff, Leadership Rounding is an effective method to:

- collect vital information
- support and engage staff
- reward and recognize
- validate key behaviors



TREVOR WICHNER

Executive Director
Knute Nelson/
Franciscan Sisters of
Little Falls

"Leadership Rounding creates moments when staff can have your undivided attention. It creates a space where you can build relationships and create accountability for yourself to follow up with requests and concerns. This in turn fosters trust. A trusting team whose voices are heard are more likely to be engaged. This helps start the process of culture change."

KEY BENEFITS



Build Relationships



Engage Employees



Showcase What's Going Well



Identify Improvements



**Recognize and Reward
Good Work**



Spark Connection

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Leadership Rounding vs. Stand-Ups and Safety Huddles

Leadership Rounding is focused on building relationships and connectivity. One outcome of Leadership Rounding is the positive impact it can have on safety huddles, stand-ups and environmental/safety rounding.

Safety Huddles and Stand-Ups are quick meetings to share and discuss important information about events taking place today: resident issues; supply issues; policy changes; staffing/staff issues; and concerns raised by residents/families that should be prioritized and addressed.

Leadership rounding on staff will make the day-to-day huddles stronger and more effective by empowering staff to speak up regarding concerns and issues and then take an active role in helping you resolve them and create a stronger safety culture.

Environmental/Safety Rounding is a technical tool that leaders use to identify and address specific, immediate but perhaps underestimated or overlooked issues and concerns. Staff may already be aware of these issues and concerns, but may not feel safe enough to risk raising them with leadership.

As you establish safe and trusted relationships through Leadership Rounding, you will likely find your organization relying less on environmental safety rounding.

Culture vs. Compliance

BEST PRACTICES

Before you start Leadership Rounding:

Know Your Purpose:

Your goal is to create a positive connection and build trust with each member of your staff team. Leadership Rounding is the most effective tool you have to ensure staff feel appreciated and heard, as well as gain insight into what is working well and what needs to be improved from those who are the “eyes and ears” of your organization.

Build Buy-In:

Make sure you have the support of your management team before you start Leadership Rounding. You do not want to undermine their work on solving problems or addressing concerns being raised by staff. Managers and directors should be your champions, encouraging staff to be open and honest with you, answer staff questions and dispel concerns, and amplify recognition that results from your rounding.



THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Be Consistent
2. Don't Dismiss What is Being Raised
3. Hold Purposeful Conversations, Not Complaint Sessions

Consistency is Critical:

Leadership Rounding must be a hard-wired habit.

Make the time. Announce the time. Stick to the time.

Try to round weekly, reaching each employee once a quarter. Remember: Be flexible – you have staff that work at all times of the day and night, and some days will be busier than others. Find the best time that works for them.

Communication is Key:

Staff need to know why Leadership Rounding benefits them. Tell them in advance why you are implementing this practice, their role and the benefits it will provide to them and their fellow team members. Distribute the questions you will ask in advance so staff know what to expect and be prepared to engage.

Active Listening:

Use Leadership Rounding as a dedicated time to listen to your staff. Don't just convey information. Have a purposeful conversation. Remember: staff assume you know what is broke and what needs to be fixed. Asking them directly will help bring information and issues to the surface and engage them in helping you solve the problem.

BEST PRACTICES

Document:

Remember to document what you hear using a Leadership Rounding Log. The log will help you share key findings with your leadership and/or management teams and remind you of who should be recognized for doing good work. Keep documentation simple – taking no more than 5 minutes to capture your notes.

Follow-Up, Follow Through:

Take what you learn from your staff and shift the challenges you can address into positive outcomes. Seek “quick wins” that staff will recognize as you start the program. Consider engaging front-line staff in longer-term projects for challenges you are not able to immediately address. Share what you learn with everyone on your staff team.

Recognize and Reward:

Identify recognition opportunities for staff who are going above and beyond their typical role or exemplifying the Safe Care for Seniors pledge to provide safe, quality care with respect and dignity and speaking up to prevent harm. Thank them with a hand-written note or email, recognize them at an all-staff meeting or reward them with an incentive.



MICHELLE OLSON

Bath Aide
Knute Nelson/
Franciscan Sisters of
Little Falls

“I am a dedicated, hard-working employee who strives every day to do my best to make a positive impact on the employees I work with, as well as providing care for the Sisters. Being asked what I think is working well or could be improved gives me a sense that I am an important asset to the team and my voice is being heard.”



READY TO ROUND?

Rounding with staff is an effective method for leaders to hear firsthand what is going well and what issues need to be addressed within your organization. It serves as an important signal of your commitment to staff, performance excellence and a culture of safety. Use this to guide as you prepare to implement Leadership Rounding in your organization.

GETTING STARTED

- Know your purpose
- Ensure support from your management team.
- Determine and keep a consistent schedule.
- Begin by telling your staff about rounding.
- Use a rounding log to record feedback.
- Share results with everyone on staff.
- Take action.
- Recognize and reward.

Download the
Leadership
Rounding Checklist



ROUNDING CHECKLIST

Questions to Consider before Rounding

- ☐ Which leader(s) will conduct rounds?
- ☐ How frequently will rounds take place?
- ☐ What questions will you ask? What do you want to learn?
- ☐ What issues have been identified where staff input is needed?

Getting Started

- ☐ Communicate Before You Start: Tell your staff what rounding is, what they can expect and when it will happen.
- ☐ Be Consistent: Keep a predictable rounding schedule.
- ☐ Make Notes: Use a Rounding Log to record responses and ideas.
- ☐ Be Transparent: Show staff what is on the Rounding Log

Rounding

Greeting, Care and Comfort:

- ☐ Make an introduction. If you already know the staff person, ask about known or common interests. Put them at ease.
- ☐ Conduct rounds as planned, maintaining a positive tone and taking the time to listen and respond to staff needs and ideas.

Ask Questions

- ☐ Use a Rounding Log to guide questions and document key points.

Listen and Answer:

- ☐ Listen, learn and share information.
- ☐ When staff raise issues or ask for help, tell them what you will do with the information and by what deadline. Take notes and follow up on what you said you would do.
- ☐ Follow-up on previous issues or requests, and share with staff how the issues were addressed or resolved.
- ☐ Use a Stoplight Report to communicate actions broadly.

After Rounding

Act:

- ☐ Identify frequently noted issues and/or themes.
- ☐ Prioritize by level of urgency, threat or ability to resolve.

KEY ELEMENTS OF ROUNDING ON STAFF

Greetings, care and comfort

- Provide an introduction. If you already know the person, ask about common interests or other topics (e.g. family, hobbies). Put them at ease.

Ask questions

- What is working well in your area?
- What are some things that make it difficult for you to do your job? What are your suggestions for fixing it?
- What safety concerns do you have?
- Are there individuals or a team you think I should recognize for doing exceptional work?
- What feedback from residents/families should I know about?
- Ask about any special projects, focus areas, etc.

Listen and answer

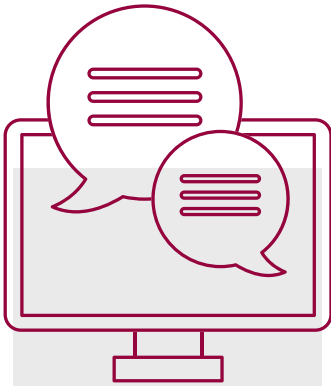
- Listen, learn, and share information.

Take action

- Share what you will do with the information and by what deadline. Take notes and follow up on actions.
- Use a Stoplight Report to communicate actions and post it in a place where staff will see them.

Express appreciation

- Say thank you and follow up as promised.

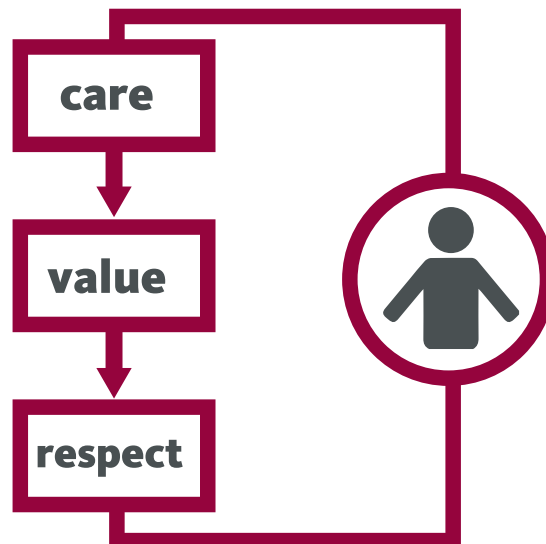


BEFORE YOUR ROUND, COMMUNICATE:

Communication is critical to successful and effective Leadership Rounding. Consider the communication that is needed to staff across all departments before you start rounding. First, you must remember why you are doing this and what it will accomplish:

Provide you with the opportunity to listen to staff, make a personal connection, find out what is going well, learn what improvements can be made, and reward and recognize people.

More importantly, Leadership Rounding ensures that your staff knows you:



Leadership Rounding is not intended to look for faults or for compliance with policies or regulations. It's a tool to proactively address issues and reinforce positive behaviors, and to show you are committed to resolving issues and willing to follow-up, even when the outcome may not be what staff hoped it would be.

Explaining your reasons for being there and establishing a tone of “no fault” exploration of ideas and issues will encourage open and honest communication and lay the foundation for trusted relationships between you and staff.

SAMPLE MESSAGE TO STAFF:

Together we are about to undertake a new practice to strengthen our personal connections and learn more from each other: Leadership Rounding.

We see and support the work that you do every day and are incredibly thankful to have you as a member of dedicated staff team. But sometimes when our days are busy, we don't find the time to talk to each other, share ideas, recognize good work and share what we could be doing better.

That's the purpose of Leadership Rounding. It is the opportunity for us to hear directly from you. To see how things are going and to know how you are doing. To hear what is working well and to see we might be able to do better. To see if you have tools and equipment to do your job well and learn if someone on our team is going above and beyond who deserves to be recognized for what they do.

How does rounding benefit you? It's your opportunity to be heard and to share ideas with us. You will have a direct line to leadership to share your ideas on what's working well, what can be improved and how we can ensure safe, quality care. And, most importantly, this is an opportunity for staff to shine and be recognized – by their peers and by leadership.

We will be rounding on your unit/department {insert date/time}, and here are the questions that we will be asking you for your input: {insert list of questions from your rounding log}

Your role? It's quite simple to be honest. We want to hear from you.

We encourage you to share your thoughts with us. We look forward to talking with you soon.



LET'S START ROUNDING:

Leadership Rounding is at the very heart of developing high staff engagement that will help create positive outcomes for everyone in your setting. When leaders round on staff, they create strong personal relationships, demonstrate responsiveness to needs, and create a culture of appreciation and recognition.

Documenting what you learn is made easier by using a Leadership Rounding log. These logs are short documents with the core questions you will be asked and should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.

The logs should be shared with leadership team and department directors to help them see and understand the insights and perspectives of their staff. The logs also serve as the primary information source for sharing positive outcomes and actions you are taking to address issues via a Stoplight Report.



Leadership Rounding Tracking Tool

Leader	Dates, Locations, and # of staff visited	
Before Rounding - Scouting Report: List any notable dept. accomplishments, new equip, staff to recognize, known concerns, etc.		
During Rounding: Ask questions/Listen:	Take Action: Follow-up plan (✓ items to consider moving to stoplight report for follow-up)	Department
What is working well in your area?		
What are some things that make it difficult for you to do your job? What are your suggestions for fixing it?		
What safety concerns do you have?		
Are there any individuals or groups you think I should be recognizing for doing exceptional work?		
(insert question related to special projects, organizational focus areas, etc)		
After Rounding: (self-reflection for leader on what you learned or opportunities for improvement)		

YOU ROUNDED... NOW WHAT?

Assess. Act. Share.

Leadership Rounding provides keen insight and perspective into your operations, staff engagement, resident safety and satisfaction.

Once you have completed your rounding, it's time to ask yourself “now what?”

Acting on what you learned during Leadership Rounding is the next step in the process; it is important to share what you learned and what you are doing about the concerns and ideas that were raised during your rounds with everyone on staff.

A Stoplight Report helps you prioritize what you learned into three areas: items that have been addressed, items in progress and items you are unable to address at this time.

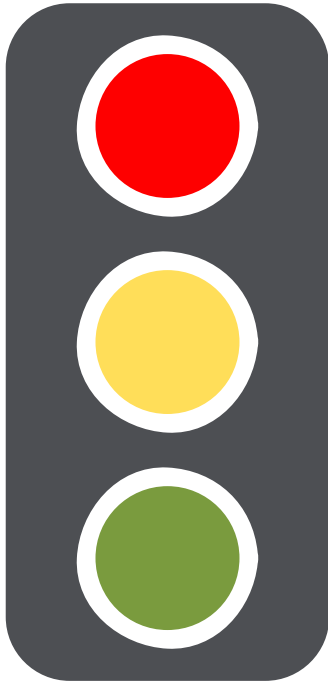
Developing this report and sharing it with your entire staff team demonstrates your commitment to being proactive and transparent in seeking feedback, correcting issues and resolving concerns.



BEST PRACTICE:

While you may not be able to address all concerns raised by your staff, it is important to look for opportunities to correct problems and celebrate achievements in each Leadership Round.





COMPLETE A STOPLIGHT REPORT

A Stoplight Report is a fast and easy way to communicate how the ideas, concerns and barriers uncovered during Leadership Rounding are dealt with and resolved. The information should be posted on your organization's communication boards and shared through other communication resources.

Think of a Stoplight Report as a way to keep track of and share what you've learned during your rounds and the actions that are taking place as a result:



Items that have been addressed.



Items in progress.



Items that can't be done and why.



BEST PRACTICES:

- Format the report so that it is meaningful to you, your management team and staff.
- Provide enough information so staff see ideas, concerns and action.
- Make sure each item is understanding to someone who might read it "cold."



FREE DOWNLOADS:

[Download Stoplight Report Template](#)

[Download Completed Stoplight Report](#)

[Download Completed Stoplight Report](#)

RECOGNIZE & REWARD

It's important to thank those staff who shared ideas for improvement with you or were recognized by their peers for going above and beyond to treat people with respect and dignity or prevent harm from it happens.

A hand-written thank you note or email lets staff know that you not only listened to them but heard them and acted upon their concerns. You may also want to consider recognizing them at an all-staff meeting or other event, or rewarding them with an incentive that has meaning to them (e.g. lunch with you, gift cards, a certificate, etc.)

Dear Sue:

Jen Olson told me today about the number of positive comments you have been getting on the resident satisfaction surveys.

She specifically mentioned that several residents and family members commented about your positive outlook and how you are always available to meet their needs.

Jen also mentioned that you have been a welcoming and helpful mentor to new staff. This is very important as it helps new team members feel like they belong from day one. Thank you for being such a valuable part of our organization!

*Sincerely,
Dan*



Dear Jim:

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding our mechanical lift equipment with me this week.

I am sharing your feedback with members of our management and maintenance team and asking them to do a complete assessment of the equipment to determine what steps we need to take to make sure the equipment works so we can reduce the risk of falls, help our residents feel safety and reduce the physical stress on our staff.

You are a great example of someone who is living our Safe Care for Seniors pledge to speak up to prevent harm, and I am very thankful to have you on our team.

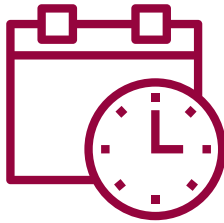
*Sincerely,
Mary*



BEST PRACTICE:

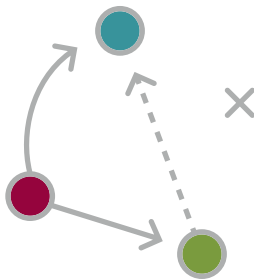
Invite staff who raised concerns and solutions to potential concerns to participate in your organization's Safety & Quality Improvement initiatives.

TROUBLESHOOTING



Make and keep the commitment.

Commit to making your rounding scheduled and Purposeful. Once you commit to rounding, show up. Don't disappoint. Don't let something "more important than them" keep you from your commitment. Prepare for the inevitable. Scheduling conflicts are sure to arise. Keep your announced schedule loose, such as "sometime during the 3rd week of the month." Commit loudly and publicly to keeping true to your rounds but explain that at times you might be called away to deal with much "less interesting" tasks.



Set and manage expectations

Be sure to have the support of your leadership/management team before you begin your rounding. Your employees will need to see that leadership rounding is embraced and supported by all in management and you will need managers to help encourage employees to engage in the process. Also, be sure staff know when you are coming, what types of questions you will be asking and why you are interested. Communicate this information publicly – early and often.



You don't have to personally fix every problem.

Your job as a leader is to make your best judgment when issues arise and to close the loop and communicate. Understand the issues from the employee's perspective, connect their problems with the resources or solutions and ensure the entire team is engaged with success. If the answer is no, not popular or can't be implemented at this time, you need to share that information and explain why.



Be willing to have tough conversations.

Not all staff may embrace rounding; some will view it with skepticism and some may be hesitant to speak up. Be prepared. Help put people at ease to have a conversation. Answer questions directly, honestly, and compassionately. Make sure you follow up. How you communicate in difficult conversations and the actions you take after receiving feedback will help staff see you as accountable leader who genuinely appreciates them.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Accept criticism and negative feedback with humility.

When you begin rounding with staff, you may find a couple of common patterns to the conversation. First, you might have some timid employees who are reticent to open up to you. Conversely, you might run into an employee or two who are perfectly comfortable “telling you like it is.” Sometimes this can be hard to hear, especially when you feel such ownership for a process, team, its mission and values. The best advice is to validate their concerns. Remind yourself that staff are good people and they have the best intention; their hearts are in the right place and they mean the best.

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Early in the rounding process, hotly-delivered feedback may be common. The more you talk and the more regular your conversations become, the more measured this type of communication will become. When you are on the receiving end of this hotly-delivered feedback, remain calm, rational and don't be defensive. Assume the message is coming from a good place. Watch and listen carefully for the person's real message. Repeat back to them what you heard, “I want to make sure I'm understanding you...” Answer questions honestly. Don't make any promises you can't keep.

Just because you're free, doesn't mean they are.

Every leader who commits to rounding with staff does it when their calendars are free. Be Aware: Just because you have a free time, doesn't mean your staff does. Ask their manager how best to coordinate with the staff's schedule to be sure you're rounding at a time that is good for THEM.

Remember, you still have something to learn.

A person is smart. People are smarter. Let staff teach you something every once in a while. Sometimes, it's one of the hardest things for senior leadership to do. Two words: Remain humble! Your staff are well-acquainted with the minutia of the job. Don't pretend to know something you don't. It won't impress.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Provide feedback.

The handwritten thank you note is a particularly simple, yet effective, recognition tool. It shows staff you noticed and took time to respond, and it reinforces desired behavior. As with any feedback, be specific in what you write: outline the who, what, when, and where.

Share results.

Once you have completed rounding, it is important to share what you learned with your staff, what you will be acting on and when they will see the results. Sharing the stoplight report and identifying those who were responsible for raising the concerns being addressed is key to engaging and empowering employees and instilling a positive culture in your organization

It's ok to be uncomfortable at first - just be sincere and be yourself.

Leadership rounding may not feel natural at first. Your staff want you to know them, to be seen and to be heard, and to be valued by you. As the leader, you set the tone and behavior that ensures your mission is embraced and aspired to by all who live and work in your setting.

**BEST PRACTICE:**

What gets recognized gets repeated; what gets celebrated becomes a habit.

RESOURCES

VIDEO RESOURCE

- Leadership Rounding Overview

SAMPLE FORMS

- Preparation Checklist
- Rounding Log
- Stoplight Report

SAMPLE MESSAGING

- Staff Message - Prior to Rounding
- Staff Message - Thank You Notes



LEADINGAGE MINNESOTA EXPERT RESOURCE:



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