

Translating Empathy in a Senior Community

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Abstract : With a grey wave sweeping across the world and people living longer than ever, more individuals will reside in retirement communities in unprecedented numbers. Enhancing the resident stay within these communities is imperative to reduce past stigmas associated with senior communities. This exploratory quantitative investigation examined interview contents of employees and residents to see if empathy was observed. The results showed the employees across all ranges had a much better grasp of affective empathy, yet with greater experience and age, it was clear that cognitive empathy had to be used with affective empathy in order to gain better trust across the community of residents. Outcomes from the study suggest that future training programs for employees are operationalized to include both affective and cognitive empathy practices. This study is unique in that two scales of empathy were transformed into qualitative questions, and in-depth employee and resident interviews were conducted. The study answers many calls of research to provide more specific studies in senior living communities.

Keywords : senior living community, transformational service research, qualitative research

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