

Service Design

Supporting Relatives to the Residents of Retirement Homes

A Report By:

Alexander Gövnes
Florian Dymke
Johan Helligren
Pedro H. Marinho
Stephanie Neumann



Table of Contents

Introduction	03
Methods	04
Identified Stakeholders	05
Insights from the interview with the social worker	09
The journey of settling into a retirement home	10
Explaining the emotional journey and empathising (Personas)	13
Relationship-building with care staff	17
Designing Services for Perstorp	21
References	28

Introduction



The vantage point for this project was to take a closer look at the communication between retirement homes and relatives to the residents living there. Within the Swedish health care system, there is a recent incentive towards creating more person-centered care, also called close care. Close care aims to improve the experience of the health care system from the care recipient's perspective. The focus on experiential qualities makes the methods of Service Design useful for developing this area. This design project is putting the relative of the care recipient at the center of our research and the purpose is to explore their viewpoints and experiences of elderly care. With our research, we want to present how the care of

a loved one living in a retirement home is influencing the relatives. We want to take a look at how we might improve the experiences of the relatives and the relationship they have towards the sheltered housing.

For the field research, we were in contact with the two retirement homes Ybbåsen and Österbo in the municipality of Perstorp. Perstorp is situated in the north of the Skåne region and has the smallest population of the region with 7 479 inhabitants. Most of them live in the urban center also named Perstorp and it is here the retirement homes included in our study are situated.

The sheltered housing Österbo has many residents with different degrees of dementia. They participate in a project called Digital Innovation for Dementia Care (DIDEC) and the residents take part in studies for development of digital means supporting the care of dementia. For this design project, we have chosen not to focus in particular on the needs of relatives to residents with dementia.

Methods



Field Research

We made visits to the retirement facilities, where we conducted interviews with some of the staff. We were able to observe the environment and get first-hand information from the staff and their perspectives on how the facilities operate.



Interviews

We interviewed the operations manager and the head nurse of both retirement homes in Perstorp for an introduction to our field of research. A phone interview with a social worker employed by the municipality with the role of giving support to relatives, helped us get an overview of the relatives' needs. We conducted two workshops and interviews with caregivers at the retirement home Ybbåsen.



Secondary Research

Research for additional information on the website of Perstorp Municipality (Perstorps Kommun, 2019).

Identified stakeholders for this project



Resident

The residents of Perstorps retirement homes have moved there since they are too ill to be taken care of at home. In some cases they have been granted to moved here because they are alone. Some of the residents have good and close contact with their family members, some have lost their contact with family or do not have any. There are cases of residents who have contact and visits of friends instead of family members. At Ybbåsen there are 8 residents living on each floor. Based on a nationwide survey carried out by Socialstyrelsen (Perstorps Kommun, 2017) the residents there seem to be generally happy and satisfied with the services and assistance received.

Identified stakeholders for this project



Relatives

In this project we focus on the relatives of elderly people who live in retirement homes. When we talk about relatives it is actually the closest family members who are implied, since it is often a spouse, son or daughter. Sometimes it is possible for the elderly couple to move together to the retirement home. In cases where this is not possible, the moving of a partner to the sheltered housing means an involuntary divorce for the couple. Grandchildren take a marginalized part in our research, but they could be equally involved as a son or daughter in the care of their grandparent. The common ground in their roles is the feeling of responsibility in their family members wellbeing.

Identified stakeholders for this project



Caregiving staff

The duties performed by the nursing staff include serving meals and help the residents during mealtimes. They are responsible for helping residents in cleaning their apartments, do their laundry, take care of their hygiene and do grocery shopping. They also tend to the resident's needs in a personalized way and make sure that they take their medication. In the daytime (7am-9pm) there are five caretakers working on each floor. The morning shift including showers and breakfast is busy and therefore there are three staff members working. During night time there are two staff members in the entire building who would contact the home care staff of the municipality in case additional assistance is needed. There is a large turnover of staff at Ybbåsen and Österbo. Some of the staff have worked there for a long time and some of them only stay for short periods.

Identified stakeholders for this project



Social worker responsible for relative support

This social worker is employed by the municipality to give support to relatives who take care of their spouse, parent or child. She gives emotional support and guidance, provides information and education about the rights of relatives and helps them in their situation as caretakers. She has met many different types of relatives and knows what they need help with and she therefore has a good overview and general knowledge of the situation of relatives and their needs.

Insights from the interview with the social worker



The social worker often starts her contact with relatives when they have a role of caretaker and their partner or parent is still living at home. She explained how the care system with home care staff at most occasions has a relationship to the care recipient and their relative from when they are taken care of in their home. The social worker has often followed the relatives through the process of having their loved ones move into the retirement home. She mentioned how the information need and communication with relatives get more intense during the moving in phase to the retirement home and then again when their loved one passes away.

We learned how the process of enrolling into a retirement home is supported by health care staff. We also learned that this transition is a very emotional experience for the relative. Since the phase of moving into a retirement home is such an emotional experience for the relative and also entails the transfer of care from one organization to another, we chose to take a closer look at this process.



Care at home

The journey starts at the point where the relatives are taking care of the elderly at home. We here discovered that the care staff is very involved in the decision of whether to initiate the process of relocating the person to a retirement home. The care staff which gives support at home could report that the workload has gotten too heavy and that the elderly would be taken care of better at a retirement home. A medical report from a doctor will also play a role in judgment of the care needs of the elderly person.

Decision made

When the decision is made to apply for a retirement home a form has to be filled out. This form can be found online and those not practiced in using the internet can fill out the form with help of a social administrator or social worker. The social administrator has the legal power to decide what care the elderly will be given and uses the opinion of the care staff and doctor as a basis for the decision. The social administrator has already been involved in the granting of care during the care at home phase.

Moving in

Once the placement at the retirement home has been granted, many practical issues regarding the move have to be solved. The relatives have a need for information about the retirement home, which they contact care staff about. This is also a time where the social worker for relative support is often contacted.



New Roles for the Relatives

The emotional experience of placing a relative at retirement home might be different if the family member is a child or a spouse who has been involved in home care of the resident. For a child of the elderly person, it might mean a relief to get help with the care and it allows them to spend more time on their other family members, career, etc. They have spent much time being caretakers but now they can be sons and daughters again and spend more time on their relationships with their parents instead of being concerned about practical issues. For a spouse, it might be experienced as an involuntary divorce since they will not any longer live with their partner. The relative leaves most of their care role to the care staff. This transition might become difficult as the relatives have become experts in caring for the resident, they must learn to trust that the staff will do as good a job. There might also be uncertainty, lack of information about the new home, lack of trust in the people who will take over the care and the feeling of guilt for not being able to take care of their relative anymore.

Settled in

After moving in, a transitional phase starts for resident and their relatives. The resident, care staff and relatives need to establish new routines and get used to each other. In this phase it is very important to establish and strengthen relationships between all involved parties to help the resident get settled. The relative support person told us: "...the relatives are looking critically at the accommodation. If the care staff have a good reception and treatment of the relatives, their anxiety will settle. This is of a very central concern". If the relatives live further away it can be very difficult to be involved in this process of settling in. They know someone is taking care of the situation professionally but they are still worried because they do not feel involved and are not sure about the well-being of their parents or spouse.

Explaining the emotional journey and empathising (Personas)

In order to illustrate the experience of each stakeholder throughout their journey, we have created a set of personas representing the resident, their relatives and a member of the care staff. They represent the core users of the service based on the information obtained through our research. We also created short stories to exemplify their experience as they interact with the care services.



They jointly made the decision to apply for a retirement home. Once the application was granted, Karl moved to Ybbåsen. Karl participates in a lot of activities at Ybbåsen, where he has also become friendly with other residents. In addition, from time to time he does some gardening with the help of the staff. Karl feels that Gunnel is more relaxed after his move. An event that Karl is looking forward to is the mingle night, when his and other families visit Ybbåsen.

Karl has suffered from dementia for a few years. His wife Gunnel takes care of him at home. Karl loves his home because he has so many memories from there. But over time, his care needs have grown too demanding for Gunnel to handle by herself, so they are getting help from the home care services. Because of the progressing dementia, Karl doesn't understand completely what is happening but he does notice that Gunnel is often worried and stressed.

After some time of home care, the care staff suggested that they apply for a retirement home for Karl to make sure that he will receive appropriate care. Karl's doctor has written a report about his health situation and evaluated the current home care situation. As the home care staff has mentioned, the doctor tells Gunnel and Emma that it's not possible to guarantee good and appropriate care in the future if Karl remains at home.



Lately, Gunnel has been feeling overwhelmed by the effort required to take care of Karl at home. She spends a lot of time looking after him, not having enough time for herself. The home care staff that have been helping her look after Karl suggested that he move to a retirement home due to his worsening condition.

Because she took care for Karl for so long, she feels that she knows what is best for him and does not want to be separated from her husband, that would feel like an involuntary divorce. Furthermore, it would break her heart putting Karl in a completely unknown environment and letting strangers take care of him. After the medical and care report by Karl's doctor, she has come to realize that it would be better to hand over the care responsibilities to professionals. Emma and Gunnel are reading about Ybbåsen on its website and brochure, looking through its Instagram account, where they can see pictures of activities and events, and visiting the retirement home.

Through the the positive impression created by these, Gunnel feels safer in making the decision than before. However, the feeling of guilt lingers. After filling out the application form and waiting a few weeks, they receive the letter of approval from the municipality. In order to get to know the care staff at the retirement home, Gunnel and Emma participate in a welcome meeting. There, they meet Nina who will be responsible for Karl during his stay at Ybbåsen. Gunnel is able to tell Nina the most important information about Karl, such as dietary preferences and what types of activities he enjoys, and his life background.

After the meeting and realizing that there will be a person at Ybbåsen who knows Karl well, she feels reassured. Despite this, Gunnel is very emotional on the day that Karl moves and visits him every day to make sure that he is well.



As she lives in Stockholm and works a lot, Emma is not able to visit her parents that often. Whenever she visits her parents, she tries to help them out. Emma is worried both for Karl and because she notices that Gunnel sacrifices herself so much and doesn't have time for herself. She and Gunnel sometimes discuss the option of applying for a spot at a retirement home for Karl. For her, it is very hard to see how much Gunnel is suffering from the current situation and she starts feeling guilty that she is not able to help her more as she has her own family and a full time job.

Emma is gradually realizing that the advantages of the retirement home outweigh the disadvantages. She is trying to make Gunnel understand that this is the best option for everyone. Although she still has doubts about the future, she convinces Gunnel to look through the brochure and visit the Ybbåsen website. They also visit Ybbåsen to have a look for themselves.

Looking through information online and having been able to get an impression on the spot makes them feel more secure in their decision. Emma is helping Gunnel with the application form for Ybbåsen.

Before moving in, Emma and Gunnel get to know caregiver Nina at the welcome meeting. From now on Nina is the contact person for Emma and Gunnel, they can always get in touch with her if they have specific questions about Karl. Because of the conversation with Nina and the professional and personal impression she gave Emma, Emma feels more calm about the situation.

When Emma visits her father, she usually has a chat with Nina. They talk about how Karl is doing and how Emma herself is dealing with the situation. Emma really appreciates those moments, their personal relationship makes her feel that she can really trust Nina.



Nina works at Ybbåsen as a nurse. She organises the welcome meeting for Gunnel and Emma to talk about Karl's life and his personality and preferences. She already received documents about his health condition from the home care staff, this information will be stored in Karl's resident file. To Nina, it is very important to give Gunnel and Emma a good impression and to be there for them if they have any questions. She takes responsibility to make sure that all members of the staff has the same basic knowledge about Karl. She is in charge of more specific questions and decisions concerning him. Every time Gunnel and Emma visit, she tries to talk to them for around five minutes. Even when she has a stressful work schedule, she tries to make time for these conversations. Talking about the relatives' daily mood and meeting Karl brings Nina closer to them and allows her to understand them better. She knows that this is important to further build their relationship during Karl's stay.

Relationship-building with care staff

The relatives' feelings of guilt, worry and wanting to be more involved with the care of their loved ones were recurring themes throughout our research. These themes also play a significant role in the experience which relatives have when their loved one moves to a retirement home. The issues presented below describe the relatives' emotional needs further and form the basis for our design proposals:

Establishing trust

To create trust, relatives need information about what is happening during the phases of preparing the stay, moving in and settling down. If they have the feeling, they are guided well, they feel safe. The first and general impression of the care facility is also the beginning of a trust-building relationship. For develop the relationship further, frequent communication is necessary. The more personal the communication is, the easier it is for the relatives to build trust with staff and ultimately with the institution. For example, the 5-min-chat is a good way to show interest for their needs.

Feeling involved

To feel included actively the relatives need information about current processes and phases, further steps and other requirements for matching expectations and avoiding disappointments. Providing information is divided into practical and more personal. Practical and important information, for example about moving in, has to be accessible all the time. The personal information, which is about the daily life, routines, activities, and well-being is way more important and matters more for building trust. Providing this information requires frequent communication between staff and relatives.

The treatment of relatives

The relative support person described to us how important it is for relatives to be seen and get a personal treatment by the staff, for example, a "Hello, how are you today?" when they come to visit. She also told us: "Information about how residents feel, is important info to the relative. Such as 'In the night he slept great'. And telling the truth is important, since the relatives might not get this information directly. The residents tend to hold back on information, not to worry their loved ones. The loved ones trust in getting the right information from the care staff. This information provides participation and is important." Therefore the staff should be informed about the residents one's well being and how their day has been, so they can talk to the relatives about it. The staff should not become defensive when the relatives have questions or concerns. This kind of treatment is crucial in order for the relative to establish trust in the staff.

Existing opportunities for communication

We have identified various means by which retirement homes in Perstorp currently maintain contact and build trust with relatives:

Phone calls

Based on this workshop we have discovered that relatives of residents, who appear to mainly live near Perstorp, prefer to visit the facility rather than calling. According to the staff, they mainly call if they have specific questions for the staff, usually regarding changes in the medical condition of the resident. When relatives call they contact the common staff phone on the floor and they speak to whoever is available at that time. No specific time of the day for receiving phone calls was mentioned. In general, the staff did not feel that relatives contact them especially frequently, at least not to an extent where it could be considered a hindrance to the execution of their duties.

Visits

There are no mandated visiting hours for relatives, they can come whenever they like. Commonly these relatives come and visit during the afternoon and stay in the rooms. When interviewing the care staff we found out that they pay close attention to when a relative comes and visits. The care staff tries to put away a few minutes for the relative to talk to them since they feel it's the best way to create a relationship with the relative. The staff thinks these few minutes contribute the most to having a good relationship with a relative. "We always take this time with a relative. It is so important to set aside time for these extra five minutes of conversation with the relatives when they arrive, to get to know the resident better and to keep a good relationship with the relative. There is not a good connection with everyone, but with most of them. Does one have time to spare and they [the relative] feel that there is time, then the contact is good most of the time."

The welcome meeting

The welcome meeting, with both relatives and the elderly person in attendance, is a way for the staff to get to know the new resident and learn their individual needs. The staff member attending this meeting becomes assigned to the person moving in as their designated contact person, meaning that they are the main person responsible for seeing the new residents individual needs. As many people staying at Österbo suffer from dementia and are thus not able to express their needs clearly, their relatives play an important role in introducing them, telling their life stories, medical needs, habits, likes and dislikes and so forth. The staff working at Ybbåsen confirm that the relatives are mainly asking about information regarding practical things during these meetings. They also mention the important role of these meetings for them in their care work: "We have become better at carrying out these meeting in later years. It has become noticeable that they have an effect later in case the resident becomes more ill and their needs changes. Small things such as they dislike being touched or food preferences, might be things they cannot tell themselves within half a years time."

Contact person

Upon first moving in each resident is assigned a member of the staff as their designated contact person. They would call the floor, the staff answering will look at the weekly schedule and tell them when to call back to reach their staff member. They also could leave a message, get a callback or write an email. The contact person is also intended to be available to answer concerns and questions from relatives. Having a person who has more responsibilities and information about the residents contribute to the relationship of staff and relatives.

Mingle nights

The retirement home organises a few events every year where relatives are specially invited to visit with the purpose of coming together and meeting the staff. These are called mingle nights. In this way it's possible for the relatives to feel included, participate in activities together with the residents and form an image for themselves how life is at the retirement home.

Instagram

The retirement home has an Instagram account where they post "highlights" of the daily life of the elderly. Some staff members are managing the posting on Instagram. For the family of the resident, this channel is a way to receive impressions of daily life, special events and activities at the retirement home. Getting visual impressions give relatives the feeling that the resident is doing well.

Relationship building during the moving in process

As we have established, in order for relatives to feel that their loved ones are safe and taken care it is vital that they establish a trusting relationship with the care staff. Building on the previously defined user journey we have further broken down the process of moving into a retirement home into a series of key touch points and also added a new one, several of which present design opportunities that we decided work with in order to create a service that could enhance trust between relatives, residents and staff members. We decided to design a completely analog service. With the exception of a brochure available on both paper and PDF, all of the touch points we have chosen to focus on currently use paper as a medium.

We do not envision that transitioning the entire service to a new digital system would significantly improve its outcomes with regards to creating trust between residents, relatives and staff. Paper also has advantages in itself: it is cheap and disposable, requires no maintenance and can easily be copied and distributed around a physical space. Perhaps most importantly, a completely paper-based system does not create the myriad privacy and data security issues that a digital one most likely would. Our interviews with staff members at the Ybbåsen facility also revealed a reluctance among them to adopt digital tools. Furthermore, the costs of implementing a digital system in a mostly analog workplace would be significant.

Welcome meeting

As previously discussed, the welcome meeting, which takes place either in the resident's original home prior to moving or in the retirement home shortly after their moving in, the resident creates a folder with relevant personal information in collaboration with their relatives and the staff. This is then used as a basis for their individual treatment plan. If the meeting takes place in their home, this is also when the resident first encounters members of the staff in person.

We have identified the lack of reciprocity in the initial exchange of personal information as a key issue. The information about the resident gathered during the welcome meeting is used as a basis for creating a folder containing pertinent personal information which will then be available to any staff member who will interact with the resident in the future, a system that appears to work well based on our interviews with staff members. However, there is no equivalent formalised system for familiarising the resident or their relatives with the different staff members, a process that is currently assumed to happen organically and is thus very much left to the individual staff member to arrange. In a facility such as Yobåsen, with high staff turnover and residents who might feel vulnerable and insecure when looked after by staff members they do not know, this is not an ideal situation.

Website and brochure

A brochure containing basic information about the retirement home is mailed to the resident prior to them moving into the retirement home, this information is also available in PDF form on the Perstorp municipality website. However, this brochure does not contain any information that might help them create an image of the staff members they are going to interact with and be dependent on in their daily lives, something that our research indicates is the type of information that would most facilitate establishing trust between them, their relatives and the staff. Thus, given that the aim of our service is to increase trust, we have determined that the brochure alone is not sufficient to achieve that purpose.

Designing services for Perstorp

As reported previously, the experience of sending an elderly person to a retirement home can be stressful and frustrating. One of the main issues for the relatives in the initial phase of the process is to trust that their loved one will be well taken care of in the retirement home. They are looking for information and trying to figure out how their parent or spouse will live in this new place. The retirement home have a welcome meeting as a way to respond to this issue. The staffs goal is to have a welcome meeting with the resident and the relative before they move in. However, currently this is not something they are able to do. In fact, the welcome meeting happens days or weeks after moving

With this in mind, we propose a personalized welcome letter to be sent to the resident before moving in. Not to replace the welcome meeting but to help provide, a good first impression, provide information and start to build a trusting relationship. The way the service is operated currently, the staff receives information about the resident very early in the process, but the relatives only get information about the staff after the resident has moved in. This letter should contain a greeting from the staff, practical information about moving into the retirement home and a profile of the staff members. The goal is to make the resident and the relatives feel more familiar with how the facility works, who will be taking care of the resident and who they can contact if they have questions. The letter also serves as a first step into building a trusting relationship between the relatives and the staff.

Welcome Letter

As reported previously, the experience of sending an elderly person to a retirement home can be stressful and frustrating. One of the main issues for the relatives in the initial phase of the process is to trust that their loved one will be well taken care of in the retirement home. They are looking for information and trying to figure out how their parent or spouse will live in this new place, and this is an excellent opportunity for the retirement home start building a relationship with their new residents and their families by showing them support, providing with relevant information and reassuring their commitment to take good care of the new resident.

With this opportunity in mind, we propose a personalized welcome letter to be sent to the relatives before the elderly person moves in. The way the service is operated currently, the staff receives information about the resident very early in the process, but the relatives only get information about the staff after the resident has moved in. This letter should contain practical information about the retirement home, a profile of the staff as well as their contact information. The goal is to make the relatives feel more familiar with how the facility works and who they can contact in case they need to communicate with their loved one. The letter also serves as a first step into building a trusting relationship between the relatives and the staff.

The letter contains:

A greeting from the head of the care-staff. Where they also set proper expectation about what the services are going to be provided, since we found that there is sometimes a mismatch between what residents expect and what can actually be offered.

An introduction to the staff members that will take care of the resident. To familiarize the resident and relative with them.

Practical information about moving in. Which is something highly requested by the relatives.

Activities of what the retirement home has in place. To help them get a sense of how the facility works.

We chose to use a physical medium for the welcome letter because our user group includes a number of people who are not very familiar with technology and digital communication. A physical letter is also more personalized way of communication, which is in line with the goal of establishing a relationship with the relatives.

Here we have a sample letter to illustrate what kind of information can be communicated in the welcome letter. To facilitate the vprocess of making the letter, we suggest creating a template that can be updated with new information and personalized for individual residents and relatives.

Welcome to Ybbåsen!

Dear friend and family, it is my great pleasure to get to know you. We are looking forward to your arrival. My name is Editha Lindgren and I am the head of the care staff and will be your contact person. We work as a team of a professional and friendly staff to ensure that you will have a good stay here. We will be with you every day and we will be happy to help you with anything you need. We will be with you every day and we will be happy to help you with anything you need. We will be with you every day and we will be happy to help you with anything you need.

If you have any questions, please call us at 040-333333. We will be happy to help you with anything you need.

Editha Lindgren 

Staff members:

- Staff member 1:** Editha Lindgren, 55 years, Swedish, 10 years experience, 10 years experience.
- Staff member 2:** Staff member 2, 55 years, Swedish, 10 years experience, 10 years experience.
- Staff member 3:** Staff member 3, 55 years, Swedish, 10 years experience, 10 years experience.

BEFORE MOVING IN

- Bring your own furniture and kitchen appliances.
- Bring your own bedding and towels.
- Bring your own shoes and slippers.
- Bring your own medication.
- Bring your own glasses and hearing aids.
- Bring your own TV and stereo system.
- Bring your own books and magazines.
- Bring your own pet if you have one.
- Bring your own car if you have one.
- Bring your own keys and ID card.
- Bring your own cash and credit cards.
- Bring your own identification documents.
- Bring your own passport and visa if you are a foreigner.
- Bring your own travel insurance.
- Bring your own health insurance.
- Bring your own life insurance.
- Bring your own fire insurance.
- Bring your own car insurance.
- Bring your own home insurance.
- Bring your own travel insurance.
- Bring your own health insurance.
- Bring your own life insurance.
- Bring your own fire insurance.
- Bring your own car insurance.
- Bring your own home insurance.

YBBÅSEN ACTIVITIES

- Group meals
- Activities
- Classes
- Group walks
- Classes
- Walking excursions



“We always take this time with a relative. It is so important to set aside time for these extra five minutes of conversation with the relatives when they arrive, to get to know the resident better and to keep a good relationship with the relative.”

- Caregiving Staff Member

A Process for In-Person Conversations

As much as phone calls and other long-distance means of communication might help relatives to stay in touch with the elderly and the caregivers, nothing can replace in-person communication. This is especially the case when it comes to building a trusting relationship with a new person. When visited by relatives, some of the caregivers reported going out of their way to try to have a small informal chat with the relatives. They described these moments as decisive for building and maintaining a good relationship with the residents' families. Both staff and relatives mentioned the importance of face-to-face interaction as the best way to get to know one another.

Despite of the benefits of these short interactions between relatives and staff, they only occur because of the caregivers own initiative. Since they are not required to engage the relatives in any specific manner, we suggest integrating this short conversation to the visitation process so that it does not depend on the initiative of any individual caregiver and becomes part of the services offered to the relatives.

It does not require any additional knowledge, takes only a few minutes and has the potential to engage relatives more in the caring process as well as strengthen their relationship with the caregivers. We imagine this touchpoint as a simple and informal conversation with the relatives right after the visit, perhaps before they leave the facilities. The goal is to assess the relatives needs and concerns, and address them in a supportive manner.

We understand that each relationship with a relative is unique and has its own peculiarities. Therefore, these guidelines are meant to be seen as best practices and not strict instructions. We believe that incorporating a short conversation based on these guidelines during a visit will help establish more trust between relatives and staff, and support the development of their relationship. This is even more important when the medical condition of a resident starts deteriorating, such as if the caregivers need to talk to the family members about very delicate subjects such as moving the resident to a hospital.

We have put together a few guidelines for how this service touch-point could operate and how the staff can engage the visiting relatives.

These guidelines are communicated to new staff members as a part of their initial briefing when they first start working at the facility. Because we are attempting to reinforce and formalize a behavior that is already occurring organically rather than introduce something completely new, we do not foresee a need to constantly remind the staff of the guidelines. Rather, the intent of our design is to ensure that this positive behaviour continues uninterrupted in a workplace with high staff turnover. Most of it is already known to the caregiving staff and is something they talk about with new staff members. As mentioned before, the staff is the driving force in keeping the system informed about the relatives' needs and concerns. Therefore, it might be necessary to explain to new staff members that building a good relationship with the relatives is essential for the entire service, especially later on by the end of the the user journey.

These short conversations can be held in different places such as a room, in the garden or any other part of the facility. It is important that the place is private and relatives feel comfortable to share their concerns and experience.

Below are some best practices we elaborated based on some of the pain points we have identified:



Go through the resident's folder before the visit to get information about the resident and their family, if necessary. Knowing well who they will talk to will help them to be more prepared.



Let the relatives know that the staff is there to support them and the resident and that they can be contacted if needed. This will build more trust in the staff by assuring the relatives that they can count on the caregivers to respond to their concerns.



Be ready to listen to the relatives' needs and concerns, and address them if possible. This will make the relatives know that their opinion is important and will make them feel more involved with the care of their loved one.



Let the relatives feel that they are welcome for more visits and that their presence is appreciated at the retirement home. This will encourage more engagement from the relatives with the retirement home and their activities.

Checking In/Out

When designing new services, it is common to adopt practices from services from other industries. In the hotel industry for instance, it is common practice to do a check-in and check-out procedure with the guests. We suggest a similar process but with the relatives when visiting the elderly.

The purpose of this process of checking-in and checking-out is to ensure that the relatives are able to communicate with the caring staff and start developing a more trusting relationship with them. It actualizes a practice that already exists informally and makes it part of the system.



1. Check-in

The relatives are welcomed by the staff during a visit. The staff member informs the relatives about the new procedure and that they should meet again for a small and informal conversation after the visit, before the relatives leave.



2. Visit

The relatives spend time with the elderly and check how they are feeling.

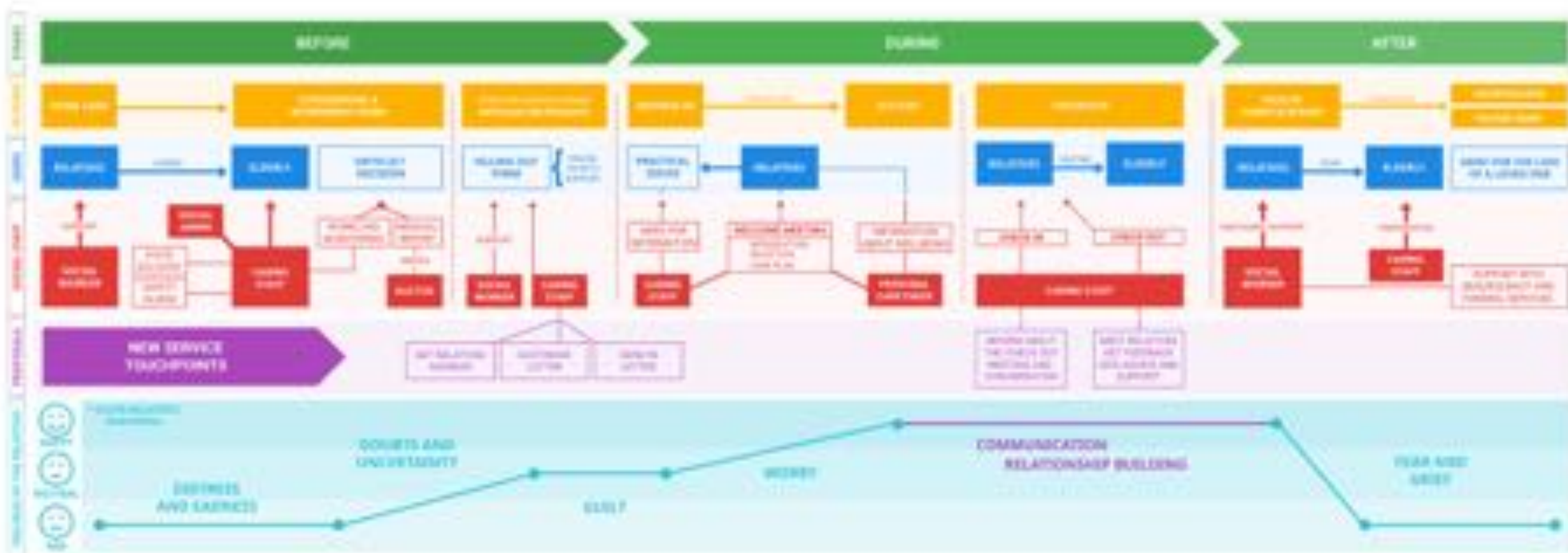


3. Check-out

The relatives meet the caring staff again, and they have a small conversation about how the relatives are feeling, if they need any support or have any remarks.

New User Journey Map

With the new service touchpoints incorporated, the user journey changes slightly by adding few new activities to be carried out by the caring staff. Before moving in, the staff prepares and sends in a welcome letter. And during the stay, the caring staff implements the process for in-person conversations, which include a check in and a check out, where relatives and staff have the opportunity to communicate and build relationships.



New Service Touchpoints Illustrated

On the right we have a short representation of our two proposals: the welcome letter and the process for in-person conversation in the context of the personas presented previously.

It illustrates how these new service touchpoints could be played out and some cases in which they can be useful.



Karl and his family have decided to place him at Ybbässen in Perstorp. At this point they are still a bit concerned about how the place will be and how Karl is gonna feel there.

Today, they received a letter from Ybbässen and they were very glad the staff is thinking about their wellbeing even before Karl has moved in. The letter contains practical information, list of activities, pictures and names of the people who will be taking care of Karl. All this information makes them feel less concerned and more reassured that Karl will be in good hands.

It's been a month since Karl has moved into Ybbässen and Anna has the chance to go to Perstorp to visit her father at Ybbässen. Upon arrival, Anna is welcomed by Nina, the same person she had already seen on the letter sent to her a month before. Nina introduces her to place and tells her that by the end of the visit, before she leaves, they should meet again for a short and informal conversation.

In that conversation, Nina listens to Anna carefully, hears her concerns and reassures that Ybbässen's staff is always there for Karl and his family if they need anything. Nina leaves the place feeling less concerned and knowing that her father is being taken care of well by Ybbässen's staff.

References

Socialstyrelsen. (2018). Vad tycker de äldre om äldreomsorgen? Retrieved 2019-05-02 from: <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/oppnajarforeelser/aldreomsorg/vadtyckerdealdreomalldreomsorgen>

Perstorps Kommun. (2017). Undersökning visar: Perstorps äldre mer nöjda. Retrieved 2019-05-02 from: <http://www.perstorp.se/sidor/huvudmeny/omsorgochstod/nyheter/undersokningvisarperstorpsaldremernojda.5.21acb03e15f2d17cb9f95f.html?fbclid=IwAR2Ym0C2YuTMGMWPIqYNlxxs3yxpiG3LJGS3SUqrhmuAm9bx9vqW2Fggg1Y>

Perstorps Kommun. (2017). Ybbåsen. Retrieved 2019-05-02 from: <http://www.perstorp.se/sidor/huvudmeny/omsorgochstod/boendensarskilda/ybbasen.4.61780eb015c1403d6341120.html>

Perstorps Kommun. (2019). Österbo. Retrieved 2019-05-02 from: <http://www.perstorp.se/sidor/huvudmeny/omsorgochstod/boendensarskilda/osterbo.4.61780eb015c1403d634112b.html>