

## **The Continuum of Care – What Does It Mean for Culture Change?**

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Culture change in our industry was born in the halls of the nursing home. For many years now, we have witnessed exciting developments regarding how we can transform the nursing homes of yesterday into the warm, welcoming homes of today. We have had the opportunity to benefit from a body of work that has been years in the making. When we talk about the “whole continuum of care,” we are referring to the undeniable fact that care doesn’t stop inside the walls of the nursing home. It reaches beyond those walls into the neighborhood streets and communities that make up our towns and cities. It reaches into the faith-based communities, the senior centers, the adult day centers, the assisted living and independent living communities, the hospitals, and the home health networks that support the needs of Elders in those towns and cities.

And in each of these environments, care does not live in a vacuum. The care experienced in the nursing home is connected to the care offered in the hospital or at home or in assisted living. Each impacts and influences the other. This is why culture change must reach across the entire continuum of care to be truly effective. We can’t push hard for change in nursing homes and simply ignore how the institutional model impacts care in someone’s home. When the general public is educated about culture change and person-directed care, we raise the bar of expectation. No one drives change better than a motivated consumer! But it is more than just teaching the public about what to demand from care at any level. It is also about empowering the public to own their role in changing the culture of care. How do they live these concepts in their own lives, in their own interactions, in their own care relationships? Quality care begins at the grassroots level. We are all part of the solution.

Two weeks ago, members of the Culture Change Network of Georgia came together to acknowledge their varied roles on the continuum of care at Eden at Home Trainer Certification in Atlanta, Georgia. This particular culture change coalition is committed to addressing care as a continuum, and given their creativity and enthusiasm, we have no doubt they will achieve great things. May their commitment be a reminder – it can be different, no matter where Elders live!

*Eden at Home™ is an initiative of the Eden Alternative® focused on applying Eden’s Ten Principles to home and community-based care.*