



# I cultivate rights

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## *The right to dignity*

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Rights week began in 2008 under the theme “I cultivate rights”. This week dedicated to the promotion and protection of resident rights stands out, for each actor in the scene, as a choice experience in highlighting the extent of these rights and the recognition of their contribution to the quality of care and services offered.

Proud of its commitment towards resident quality of life and general well being, Vigi Santé has made this occasion a yearly rendezvous.

Now 2009 offers fertile ground to cultivate “The right to dignity”.

This renewed opportunity to reflect on the meaning of our individual actions, whether they be by caregivers, managers, volunteers or visitors, should make each moment spent with the resident a great instance of humanity.

During this “right to dignity” week, it is together that we will explore our garden to rediscover, through the seasons, the importance of our every action.

*There is no other path to human solidarity than  
the search for and the respect of individual dignity.*

Pierre Lecomte du Noüy



## HUMAN BEINGS FIRST

The notion of dignity first appears at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The word comes from the Latin “*dignitas*” defined as the respect a person deserves. An essential notion to express the value of a human being, dignity has, as such, no precise definition in terms of law and rights. Philosophically however, human dignity is derived from the premise that each person must be treated as an end in itself. This imperatively leads us to consider that, in opposition to a “thing”, a person is not an instrument and cannot be replaced or sold. A person is unique and is, consequently, “without price”. Dignity therefore becomes the ethical definition of the human being.

Dignity can be read in the eyes of others looking upon us. It cannot be reduced to what I see or believe I know about the other.

**Dignity is a word with no plural.**

*Paul Claudel*

## ABOUT THE RIGHT TO DIGNITY

In international law, we notice the first appearance of the notion of dignity in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which states in its preamble “*Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world*”. Article 1 clearly states “*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights*”.

The Quebec National Assembly has also recognized in the Quebec Charter of human rights and freedoms (1976) that : “*Every person has a right to the safeguard of his dignity, honour and reputation*” (article 4).

Requiring dignity implies the rejection of all forms of discrimination and exploitation.

## DIGNITY... IN HEALTH CARE !

The Quebec health system is based on values which we consider of great importance. The Act respecting health services and social services gives express guidelines to direct management and service delivery in order that the resident be, in all interventions, *treated with courtesy, fairness and understanding, and with respect for his dignity, autonomy, needs and safety* (article 3).

## ABOUT THE CODE OF ETHICS...

The resident being the reason for the services, Vigi Santé considers the respect of human dignity as the golden rule of it's code of ethics.

We acknowledge that every action taken towards the resident must find it's inspiration from the same rights and freedoms all citizens enjoy. Our code of ethics reflects our collective and individual commitment to ensure behaviors and practices that foster and maintain a healthy and harmonious living environment.



## THE RESIDENT'S POINT OF VIEW ...

To better grasp the very meaning of dignity, we need to consider it through the eyes of the residents. How do they define it?

Dignity is...

- Being treated politely and with respect, being spoken to as one would address an adult and not a child.
- People taking time to say hello and smile at me.
- Being respectful of my intimacy and sensitive to modesty and decency when providing care.
- Being considered the person I have always been in spite of my sickness and limits.
- Being made to feel I exist and that I am not a burden.
- That my last wishes and my right to die peacefully be respected.
- To preserve my status as a human being in every stage of my life and into death.

*The only strength, the only value, the only dignity of all is to be loved.*

*Charles Péguy*



*Dignity, self esteem and pride  
are lifetime values!*



## TRUE or FALSE?

	True	False
<b>A</b> The attendants should always make sure the door is well shut when helping Mr. Dumoulin undress and put on his pyjamas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B</b> Since Mrs. Lalande has advanced Alzheimer's disease, we shouldn't bother to talk to her or say hello.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C</b> The team must respect Mrs. Tucker's desire to receive personal hygiene care by a woman.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D</b> Mr. Tremblay is in his last days and his condition has deteriorated. The center must respect his desire not to receive certain treatments and should accompany him in attempting to reduce his pain as much as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>E</b> The personnel talks to Mrs. Cortez as if she were a child but, since her mind is confused, this is not really an infringement of her dignity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Answers at the back of the folder		

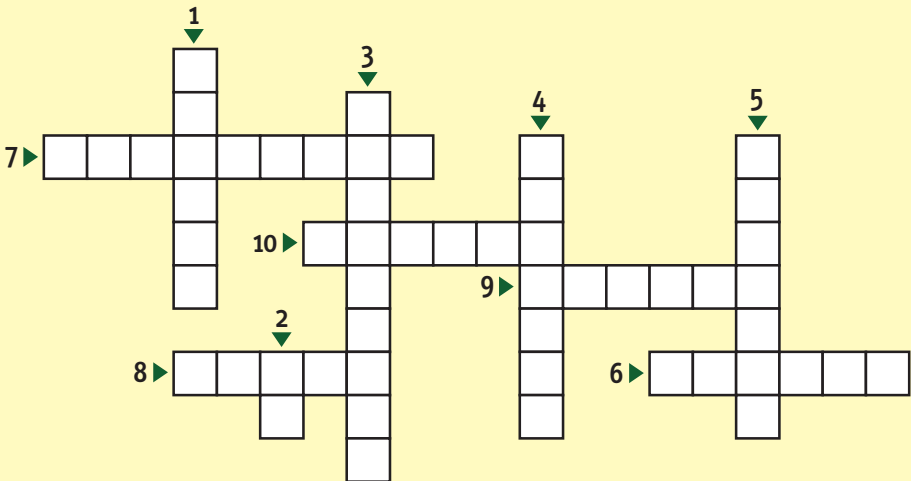
# DIGNITY WITHIN OUR CODE OF ETHICS

## DOWN

- 1 We support a living environment approach where the resident remains \_\_\_\_\_ of himself.
- 2 We address the residents by their family names preceded by Mrs, \_\_\_\_\_ or Miss.
- 3 Our mission : “through everyone’s implication and the excellence of the services, we will build a living environment open to the community, where the resident receives the respect of his being, in the heart of a unique environment frequented by \_\_\_\_\_, families, employees, and volunteers, and where living environment and work environment become one”.
- 4 The \_\_\_\_\_ of human dignity is the golden rule of our code of ethics.
- 5 The resident, in any intervention, must be treated with courtesy, equity, and comprehension, in the respect of his \_\_\_\_\_.

## ACROSS

- 6 The quality of the living environment rests on the principle of \_\_\_\_\_ respect where everyone’s collaboration is essential.
- 7 The resident must be treated as we would wish for \_\_\_\_\_ or a loved one at all times.
- 8 We adopt a \_\_\_\_\_ approach, comprehensive and non constraining, which takes into account all basic needs as well as the health needs of the resident.
- 9 The resident has a right to the respect of his \_\_\_\_\_, rhythm, choices, tastes, independence, values, and beliefs.
- 10 All actions taken towards the resident must be inspired by the respect and recognition of the same \_\_\_\_\_ and freedoms that any citizen has.



## HOW CAN WE CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESPECT OF THE RIGHT TO DIGNITY?

People involved in the CHSLD speak out :

- *“A recent change in my health now forces me to ask for help for my transfers. I was fearful of the judgments and comments of the personnel. I appreciated that no one made any humiliating comment. On the contrary, all continued to be an encouragement to me in all I was still able to do, while giving me a needed hand when necessary, and that without ever wounding my dignity.”*

**Denise Normandeau** (resident at CHSLD Vigi les Chutes)

- *“...He is a proud man; doing all he can by himself is important to him. It does require more time but we are both happier this way.”*

**Véronique Boisvert** (nurse's aid at CHSLD Vigi Shermont)

- *“When I came into my mother's room, a nurse's aid was calmly sitting on her bedside helping her to eat. He was so gentle and attentive, it could have been me sitting by my mother taking care of her.”*

**Daughter of Mrs. Nicolopoulos** (family of a resident at CHSLD Vigi Reine-Élizabeth)

- *“I dispense care to the residents the same way I would like to be cared for myself. I follow the resident's pace.”*

**Sylvie Jean** (nurse at CHSLD Vigi de l'Outaouais)

- *“The more we apply ourselves to perform our work well, the better we fulfill our obligations of quality towards the residents and in the tasks required of us. The benefits of serving a high quality meal meets our commitment of providing better quality of life to the residents; that's what we are here for. Being happy, satisfied and fulfilled in our work is outwardly manifested in the execution of our tasks throughout the day.”*

**Martin Delcourt** (cook at the CHSLD Vigi Montérégie and CHSLD Vigi Brossard)

- *“For twenty years now I have been participating in camp vacations for the residents as an accompanying volunteer. I notice each time how important it is to consider the person when providing basic care and especially how we can easily override the right to dignity of a person if only concerned with the task at hand. Dignity takes on its full meaning when we remain human as we serve humans.”*

**Jean Laflamme** (volunteer at CHSLD Vigi Notre-Dame de Lourdes)

- *“To me, it means knocking on the door and asking the resident's permission before entering his room.”*

**Claire Robillard** (team leader housekeeping at CHSLD Vigi Yves-Blais)



Masculin is used in this publication for the sole purpose of ease of reading and without any discrimination.

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- Residents' Committee of the CHSLD Vigi Yves-Blais
- Residents' Committee of the CHSLD Marie-Claret
- Vigi Santé's Users Committee
- Your CHSLD's Residents' Counsellor
- Your CHSLD's Complaints and Service Quality Commissioner
- Vigi Santé's Vigilance and Quality Committee
- Vigi Santé's general management



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*Une version française de ce feuillet est disponible sur demande.*

## « The Right to Dignity »

Theme of Rights Week  
in all Vigi Santé's CHSLDs  
from May 3 through 9, 2009

Come cultivate with us,  
the harvest will only  
be better!

Inform yourself at your CHSLD  
to obtain the names of  
the members of the Residents'  
Committee and the ways  
of contacting them.

Get the Vigi Santé brochure  
"Your satisfaction is important to us"  
You will find therein the name and particulars of the  
Complaints and Service Quality Commissioner of your CHSLD

### ANSWERS :

TRUE or FALSE : A-T, B-F, C-T, D-T and E-F

DIGNITY WITHIN OUR ETHICAL CODE :

1 : master 2 : Mr 3 : residents 4 : respect 5 : dignity 6 : mutual 7 : ourselves  
8 : human 9 : person 10 : rights