

Ask Clearly

A practical prompt sheet for naming what you need and asking your team for support they can actually give.

Why this matters. Most staff want to help. What stalls them is a vague ask: *"Everybody needs to step it up," "Can someone handle the house?"* or a frustrated group text at 11 p.m. Unclear asks get guessed at, half-done, or quietly resented. A clear ask names the need, the reason, the exact help, and what "done" looks like, so your team can say yes and mean it.

Before you ask: four quick prompts

SEE	What is actually happening? Describe it like a camera would. Facts, not feelings: <i>"The med log had 3 blank initials this week,"</i> not <i>"Nobody cares about meds."</i>
SORT	What do I need, specifically? One need per ask. If you have five, pick the one that protects residents or keeps you in compliance first.
SUPPORT	Who is the right person, and what can they realistically do? Match the ask to the role and the shift. Check: do they have the time, training and tools?
SUSTAIN	How will I know it worked? Decide what "done" looks like and when you will check back, before you open your mouth.

These four steps follow the Hunters Helpers Bridge Method: See, Sort, Support, Sustain.

The Clear Ask: six parts, one conversation

1 Name the situation "I noticed..." / "Here's what's going on..."	2 State the need "What I need is..."
3 Give the why "This matters because..." (residents, safety, licensing, the team)	4 Make the specific ask "Could you...?" Who, what, which shift.
5 Define done + timing "Done looks like... by..."	6 Offer support + invite input "Here's what I'll do to help. What would make this easier?"

PUT IT TOGETHER

"I noticed three blank entries in the evening medication record this week. Please follow our medication administration and documentation procedures, and tell me immediately if an entry is missing or a dose is uncertain. We will review the record together and follow our reporting process. Is anything getting in the way?"

Swap this for this

Same need, clearer ask. Use these as models for the asks you make most often.

NEED	INSTEAD OF...	TRY...
Shift coverage	<i>"Somebody needs to pick up Saturday."</i>	"Saturday 3–11 is open after a call-off. I need one person who's trained on med pass. If you can take it, text me by 6 tonight; I'll approve the hours as overtime."
House upkeep	<i>"This place is a mess. Do better."</i>	"The kitchen and bathrooms need to be wiped down before shift change. Can the overnight shift own the kitchen and days own the bathrooms? I'll post a 5-item checklist on the fridge."
Documentation	<i>"Your notes are terrible."</i>	"Your daily notes need what happened, how the person responded, and what you did. Can you add those three things starting tomorrow? I'll go over one note with you Thursday."
Communication	<i>"Nobody tells me anything."</i>	"For changes affecting a resident, follow our communication and escalation policy. Use the designated secure channel and required timeline. Please confirm where to find the procedure."
When YOU need help	<i>(Saying nothing and carrying it alone.)</i>	"I'm stretched thin with the survey coming. I need someone to pull the last 30 days of fire drill logs by Friday. Who has an hour on their shift for that? I'll cover the floor while you do it."

Watch for these

- Asking the whole team when the issue is one person. Talk to that person directly.
- Stacking five asks into one talk. Lead with one, write down the rest.
- Correcting staff in front of residents or families.
- Guilt or "after all I do for you." It gets compliance, not commitment.
- Resident names or health details in group texts. Keep private info private.

Close the loop

- Thank specifically: "The med log was full all week. That made Sunday's check easy."
- Check back when you said you would. A follow-up is what makes the next ask land.
- If it didn't happen, ask what got in the way before you assume they didn't care.
- Keep what worked. Good asks become house routines and checklists.

YOUR TURN

Plan your next ask

I noticed...

What I need is...

This matters because...

Could you...

Done looks like / by...

I'll help by...

Check-back date: