



Advancing Person-Directed Culture at The New Jewish Home

From Vivid Vision to Daily Practice

THE
NEW
JEWISH
HOME

Aging 

Health Care System

Founded in 1848

OUR CAMPUSES
Bronx · Manhattan

OUR PILLARS
Support at Home
Get Well Go Home
Welcome to Our Home

THE NEW JEWISH HOME

Executive Summary

Age like a New Yorker.

The New Jewish Home in Manhattan, a nonprofit senior care organization with 514 certified beds on the Upper West Side, serving 4,000 seniors annually with a workforce of more than 700, launched a multi-year culture change initiative to advance person-directed care in two pilot units. Partnering with AgingIN, the organization engaged leaders and frontline staff in a focused effort to align beliefs, behaviors, and systems with a more empowered, resident-centered culture.

The initiative combined Leading Empowered Cultures education, strategic action planning, policy and procedure updates in dining, nursing, and support services, and a Person-Directed Living Certificate Program for frontline staff. This targeted pilot strengthened leadership accountability, increased staff empowerment, and created tangible shifts in daily practice, offering a scalable model for broader organizational transformation.

**30-day
rehospitalization rate: 12%**

NYS avg: 22%
National avg: 25%

**Only NYC skilled nursing
center with full-time
Mount Sinai physicians**

We Care For 4000+
New Yorkers every Year

Loving What We Do

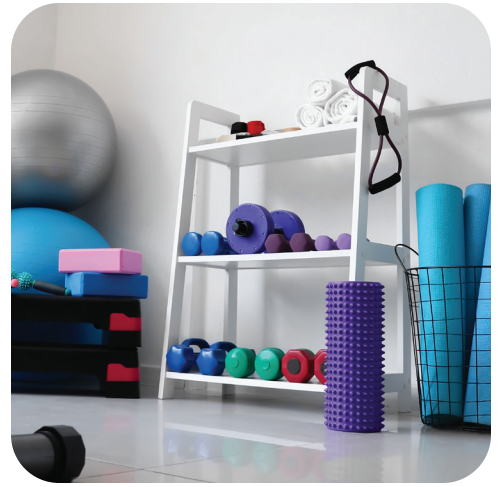
We have a workforce of **700+**
caring people

**Cutting edge rehabilitation
with Mount Sinai Health System
NYU Langone Health**

Leaders in heart health:
first post-acute program in
NYS accredited by the Joint
Commission for heart failure.

Virtual Reality therapy with
Mynd Immersive

Advancing practice through our
Research Institute of Aging



Organizational Context & Challenge

The New Jewish Home provides a comprehensive continuum of care, including short-term rehabilitation, long-term skilled nursing, memory care, adult day services, and specialized rehabilitation programs for cardiac, orthopedic, speech, and swallowing needs. Serving older adults with complex medical, cognitive, and social needs requires balancing clinical rigor with individualized, meaningful living.

While the organization had a strong foundation of quality care, leadership recognized that traditional institutional routines and systems could unintentionally limit resident choice and staff autonomy. The challenge was to shift culture in a measurable, sustainable way—moving beyond philosophy toward observable changes in how leaders lead, how staff interact, and how systems support person-directed living.

To ensure focus and feasibility, the organization began with a two-unit pilot, which includes approximately 76 residents, testing a replicable approach before expanding system-wide.

Strategy & Change Framework: Beliefs, Behaviors, and Systems

- **Beliefs:** What leaders and staff believe about older adults, autonomy, risk, and dignity
- **Behaviors:** How those beliefs show up in daily decisions and interactions
- **Systems:** The policies, procedures, and workflows that either reinforce or undermine person-directed care

AgingIN partnered with The New Jewish Home to design a structured approach ensuring that mindset shifts were supported by practice changes and formal organizational systems.



Key Initiative Components

1. Leading Empowered Cultures Education (32 Leaders)

AgingIN facilitated Leading Empowered Cultures training for executive, management, and clinical leaders. Education course objectives:

- Formulate a plan to create and sustain a collaborative coaching culture at the organization
- Develop and enhance coaching skills for person-directed leadership
- Discover approaches to support staff to think critically and make value-based decisions
- Relate to employees and teams in a manner that balances support and accountability
- Help employees and teams to consider different perspectives and participate in problem solving
- Practice the skills of coaching in one-to-one interactions and with teams
- Identify your advice monster and develop tools to grow empowerment

This component emphasized that culture change begins with leadership behavior, not frontline compliance.

It's all about leadership.

Skillset

Mindset

Culture



2. Person-Directed Living Certificate Program (100 Frontline Staff)

Approximately 100 frontline staff across the two pilot units, one post-acute/short-term rehab and one long-term care—including nurses, certified nursing assistants, therapists, and support staff—participated in a Person-Directed Living Certificate Program.

The program reinforced:

- Deep understanding of resident identity, history, and preferences
- Practical ways to support autonomy, dignity, and meaningful daily life
- Communication strategies that honor resident voice and choice
- Staff confidence in shaping resident experience and advocating for flexibility

This component emphasized that culture change begins with leadership behavior, not frontline compliance.

3. Strategic Action Planning & Policy Review (Dining, Nursing, and Support Services)

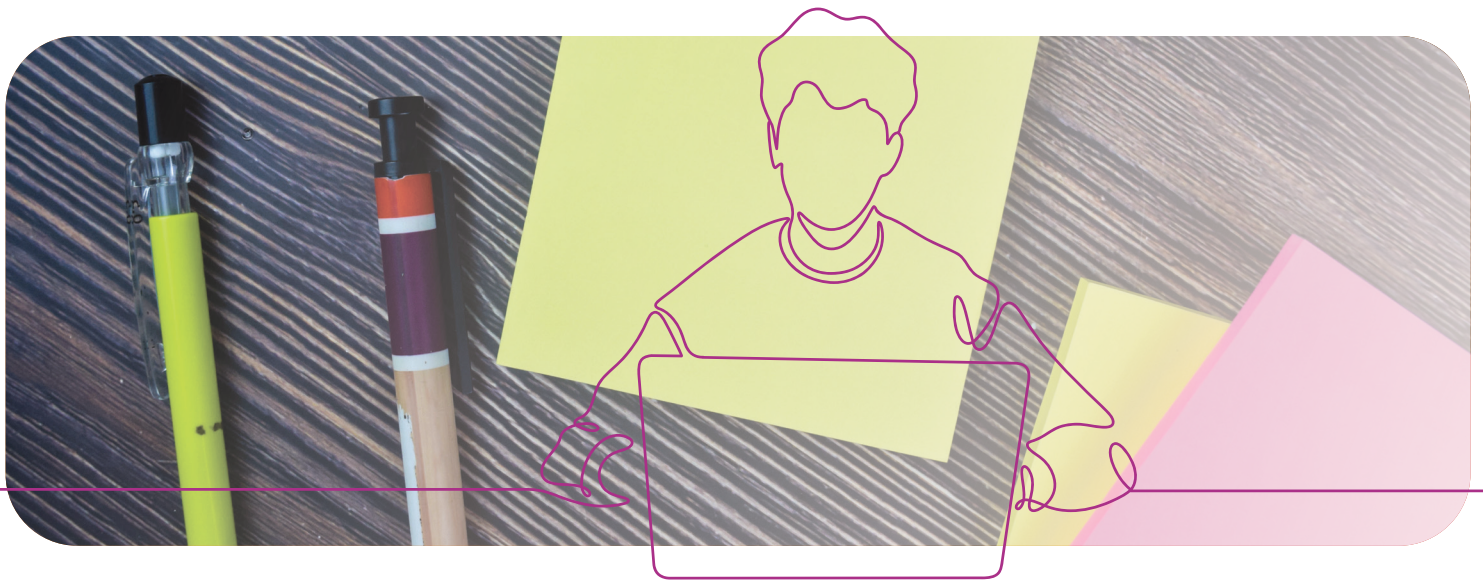
Interdisciplinary teams conducted strategic action planning to review and update policies and procedures in dining, nursing, and support services. The goal was to ensure systems aligned with person-directed beliefs rather than reinforcing institutional routines.

Examples of focus areas included:

- Dining flexibility and resident choice
- Nursing routines that support individualized schedules
- Support services that prioritize comfort, autonomy, and dignity

This work ensured that culture change was embedded in operational systems, not dependent solely on individual effort.





A critical distinction in The New Jewish Home's approach was the intentional pairing of Leading Empowered Cultures (LEC) and the Person-Directed Living Certificate (PDLC). While both programs support culture transformation, they address different—and equally essential—dimensions of change.

LEC focuses on how leaders lead.

PDLC focuses on how care and work are lived every day.

What Leading Empowered Cultures (LEC) Equips Leaders to Do

Through LEC, leaders strengthen the capacity to:

- Create psychological safety across teams
- Share decision-making authority rather than centralize control
- Support critical thinking instead of reinforcing compliance
- Hold accountability without blame
- Listen for potential rather than immediately solving problems

This leadership shift is foundational. Without it, empowerment remains aspirational rather than operational.

What the Person-Directed Living Certificate (PDLC) Provides

PDLC addresses what leadership education alone cannot. It:

- Establishes shared values and expectations for person-directed living
- Clarifies what empowerment looks like within direct care roles
- Aligns daily practice, routines, and decisions with leadership intent
- Prevents the mismatch that occurs when leaders coach empowerment, but frontline systems still constrain autonomy

PDLC translates philosophy into observable, daily action.

The Alignment Logic

The partnership between LEC and PDLC reflects a deliberate alignment strategy:

- LEC without PDLC risks coaching into a system that cannot absorb change
- PDLC without LEC risks empowerment rhetoric without leadership behavior change

Together:

- LEC builds leaders capable of empowering others
- PDLC equips staff to act with confidence, voice, and ownership
- Culture change becomes organizational—not individual

By investing in both leadership capability and frontline practice simultaneously, The New Jewish Home ensured that empowerment was reinforced at every level of the organization.

Leadership Voice: Reflections from Leading Empowered Cultures Participants

During the initiative, leaders participating in Leading Empowered Cultures (LEC) completed session evaluations reflecting on their learning and intended behavior changes. Their responses offer insight into how leadership beliefs and behaviors began to shift in real time.

When asked, “What did you learn that feels most significant to your success in applying a coaching approach?” leaders emphasized curiosity, listening, and trust:

“Ask questions and be curious. Trust that the person has the ability to find their own resolution—and that the solution is better than what you could solve yourself.”

“Meaningful active listening and taking time—not just hurrying to solve problems.”

“Coaching communication is a really great way to empower a positive work environment.”

These reflections highlight a key shift: moving from directing to facilitating, recognizing that sustainable performance comes from empowering others rather than providing answers.





When asked about course highlights, leaders noted practical skill-building and personal growth:

“Exploring my identity as a manager/coach—it helped me reflect on my style and approach.”

“Learning how to coach and feeling confident about doing so.”

“Becoming a better manager and empowering people to be self-sufficient.”

Finally, in response to, “What is one step you intend to take in applying the LEC course content?” leaders described concrete actions:

“Practice, practice, practice until it becomes part of who I am.”

“Ensuring my team makes their own decisions while I guide them without taking over.”

“Be proactive and use active listening with no agendas or preconceived ideas.”

These commitments show that culture change was actively taking root. Leaders internalized new beliefs, adopted coaching behaviors, and began embedding empowerment into daily practice—laying the foundation for a culture aligned across beliefs, behaviors, and systems.



Implementation Experience & Key Actions

Throughout the implementation, leaders and staff worked together to translate new beliefs into daily behaviors. Leaders practiced modeling empowered decision-making, while frontline teams experimented with more flexible, resident-driven approaches.

Early impacts included:

- Greater staff involvement in care planning and daily decision-making
- More adaptable routines based on resident preferences
- Increased cross-disciplinary collaboration among nursing, therapy, and social work

Challenges included overcoming long-standing institutional habits, navigating time pressures in high-acuity settings, and supporting staff through the emotional and operational demands of change. To address this, the organization emphasized ongoing coaching, transparent communication, and continuous feedback loops.

Vivid Vision Comes to Live: Outcomes & Impact

Even within a limited pilot scope, The New Jewish Home observed meaningful progress, including:

- Stronger alignment between leadership beliefs and frontline practice
- Improved staff confidence and empowerment in supporting resident choice
- Empowered caregiving and autonomy as evidenced when staff respect resident independence and support self-care, emphasizing dignity and normal living activities
- Enhanced resident engagement in daily life and care decisions; long-term care residents surveyed report decision-making increased from 0.55 to 0.66
- Cultural shift to home environment with staff noting the transformation from institutional routines to a welcoming, home-like atmosphere enhancing resident comfort and care; long-term care residents surveyed report feeling at home increases from 0.45 to 0.48 and short-term rehab residents likelihood to recommend increased from 0.72 to 0.88
- Emotional connection and belonging with residents describing feelings of family, belonging, and continuity, reinforcing identity through familiar routines and relationships
- Mutual learning and compassion as staff and residents engaging in reciprocal learning and compassionate care, strengthening relationships through shared experiences
- More person-directed policies and procedures in dining, nursing, and support
- A reinforced organizational identity grounded in dignity, respect, and meaningful living

During the initiative, leaders and staff participated in Person-Directed Living Certificate and stakeholders completed surveys and shared feedback. Their responses offer insight into how beliefs and behaviors began to shift in real time.

Resident Perspective:

“This feels like home. Over the years, I have gained adopted sons, nieces, grandsons, and granddaughters, and I feel surrounded by a loving family.

The caring staff and I share laughter. I still watch my favorite soap opera, *Day of Our lives*, just like I did when I lived at home. I could even write a book called, *A Day and Night at the New Jewish Home.*”

Staff Perspective:

*Long-Term Care
C.N.A*

“The Green House has changed how I care for residents.

I respect each person’s independence and step in only when support is needed. If a resident can make their own bed, I encourage them to do so because normal living matters. I take time to talk with residents and learn about their life stories.

Even when someone is angry, I approach them with compassion and understanding. Residents teach me every day, and what I have learned here has helped me care better for my own family as well.”

Staff Perspective:

*Short-Term Care
C.N.A.*

“The Green House made Friedman 2 more a welcoming place. I understand and embrace the importance of making patients feel at home—it’s no longer like boot camp, and the institutional dragon is gone!”

Lessons Learned & Best Practices

Key takeaways from the initiative include:

- Culture change is most effective when grounded in beliefs, behaviors, and systems
- Starting with a pilot unit allows for learning, refinement, and scalability
- Leadership modeling is critical to sustaining momentum
- Frontline education drives real-world behavior change
- Policy and procedure alignment ensures change lasts beyond training
- Partnership with AgingIN provided structure, credibility, and accountability

Conclusion & Forward Outlook

The New Jewish Home's collaboration with AgingIN illustrates how targeted leadership development, frontline training, and system-level policy reform can drive meaningful culture change—even within a limited pilot. By anchoring transformation in beliefs, behaviors, and systems, the organization has created a foundation for sustainable, scalable progress.

As The New Jewish Home looks ahead, it is positioned to expand person-directed practices across additional units, deepen leadership accountability, and continue evolving toward a culture that honors both clinical excellence and the individuality of every older adult served.

Get Support

Organizational culture is a key driver of performance, workforce stability, resident experience, and long-term sustainability. AgingIN is your guide on the side, providing the tools, education, coaching, and resources needed to launch, strengthen, and sustain culture change. From leadership development to frontline training to policy and systems transformation, AgingIN partners with organizations at every stage—helping you move from aspiration to action, and from action to impact.

Whether you are just beginning to explore person-directed culture or ready to accelerate an existing effort, AgingIN offers a proven roadmap and experienced support to help you navigate complexity, build momentum, and create empowered cultures where residents and staff thrive.

Don't run alone. Start your culture change journey with AgingIN—and build a future defined by dignity, engagement, and meaningful living.

Contact AgingIN Project Coaches:

Zoie Garza ZGarza@AgingINnovation.org and Rachel Graham RGraham@AgingINnovation.org to begin your journey.

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