Ask NAAP: How to File a Resident Council Grievance?

Filing a grievance as a resident council at a nursing home or assisted living community involves several structured steps to ensure that the concerns are taken seriously and documented correctly. Here's how the process typically works:

Here is a Guide for Resident Council Grievance Filing

1. Document the Grievance Clearly

- Write down the concern(s) in detail: include dates, times, names (if applicable), and a clear description of the issue.
- Specify whether this is a group-wide concern or if it affects a specific group of residents.
- Suggest possible resolutions if appropriate.

2. Use Internal Grievance Procedures First

- Most facilities have a formal policy for handling grievances or complaints.
- Submit the grievance in writing to:
    - The administrator
    - The director of nursing (for care-related concerns)
    - The food services director (for food-related concerns)
    - The resident care coordinator or social worker
- Keep a copy of the grievance for your records.

3. File Through the Resident Council Representative

- The council president or a designated officer should submit the grievance.
- Request a written acknowledgment of receipt and timeline for response.

4. Follow Up

- If the facility does not respond in a timely or satisfactory manner, escalate the issue.

If internal efforts don't resolve the issue, file a complaint with:

- **State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program**
    - Ombudsmen advocate for residents' rights and can mediate grievances.
    - Find your local ombudsman via: https://ltcombudsman.org/ombudsman
- **State Licensing and Certification Agency**
    - For nursing homes, contact your state's Department of Health or equivalent licensing body.
    - For assisted living, this may fall under a separate licensing board depending on the state.

Please remember to be professional and respectful in all communication, even if the issue is serious or emotional. Ask to be notified in writing of any action taken. Keep records of all communications, including responses and meeting notes.