Forms for the PELI-Mid Level and PELI-Full assessment include brief instructions. This tip sheet offers additional guidance for training staff and volunteers who will conduct the PELI preference interview. While a full PELI interview typically takes 30 minutes at one sitting, a series of three 10-minute interview sessions over a week can accomplish the same goals. PELI interviews provide an opportunity to get to know your residents and to build insight, relationships, respect and trust.

The champion for PELI at your community may serve as a “coach” for the employees or volunteers who will conduct preference interviews. Useful training topics: purpose of PELI interviews, scheduling procedures, materials to have on hand, and interviewing techniques and tips. Ideally, the champion would conduct a PELI interview with a resident while the trainee observes. Next, the trainee would conduct a resident interview while the champion observes and later privately offers constructive feedback.

If staff time for interviews is limited, consider training volunteers to conduct preference interviews. Volunteers are likely to find that leading these interviews offers a meaningful and rewarding way to connect with residents.

• Select a comfortable, private setting. Sit so that the resident can see your face. Minimize glare by directing light sources away from the resident’s face. Make sure the resident can hear you. Residents should use their usual hearing aids or other communication devices. If the resident can’t hear you, try headphones or a hearing amplifier.

• If a resident says he or she can no longer do a particular preference, say: “I want to know about every activity that would be important to you if you could do them with assistance or support.” Select “Important, but can’t do or no choice” when the resident indicates that the topic is important, but that he or she is physically unable to participate, or has no choice about participating while staying in the nursing home due to nursing home resources or scheduling.

• Be careful not to “put words in the mouth” of the interviewee. Give each person time to collect their thoughts and explain preferences.

• Offer prompts, as needed: “Is there anything you’d like to add?” “Can you say more about that?”

• Be sure to thank the nursing home resident, family member or friend at the end of each interview session. Let them know that the information will be used to help plan their care and daily activities.

• Don’t approach the preference interview as if it’s a task for the interviewer or the resident. Preference interviews are a meaningful opportunity to personalize care and focus time and resources that will help residents feel happy, cared for and comfortable with daily life.