***New Mexico Senior Services Best Practices***

****Definition**

A best practice is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and may be used as a benchmark or a standard by which to compare other practices. In addition, a best practice can evolve to become better as improvements are discovered.

**What are Best Practices?**

Best practices are an inherent part of any organization—they show connection to current research. They help staff develop thinking and problem-solving skills through combining research with active learning.

Relationships are built through opportunities for communication and teamwork. Best practices are applicable to all service levels and provide the building blocks for ideal interaction.

Best practices motivate, engage and prompt individuals to learn and improve. Individuals who develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to transfer and connect ideas and concepts across disciplines can better create successful programs and services.

**What Do Best Practices Look Like?**

Senior Centers and Multi-generational Centers that exemplify best practices are easy to detect as soon as you enter the room.

* Quality service materials are numerous
* Elders and people of all ages are engaged and focused
* Collaborative and/or authentic tasks are often used to place elders at the center of a process
* Seating arrangements are clustered, varied and functional with multi-service areas
* Staff are actively engaged with different groups, and elders are eager to enlist visitors in various tasks or assignments
* There is a joyful feeling of purposeful movement, industrious thinking and a vital and vibrant atmosphere and environment