Principles of Documentation—Keeping It Simple

It is easy for preceptors to lose focus when teaching the Principles of Documentation (POD). This summary provides key points to remember when training surveyors in this very important skill.

Principle #1—Entity compliance and noncompliance
- Use standard verbiage for the explicit statement of compliance or noncompliance.

Principle #2—Using plain language
- Be precise.
- Be succinct.
- Be clear.
- It’s OK to have different writing styles.

Principle #3—Components of a deficiency citation
- The Automated Survey Processing Environment (ASPEN) generates the regulatory reference.
- Teach deficient practice statements and relevant findings separately.

Principle #4—Relevance of onsite correction of findings
- The facility may correct a deficiency during the survey.
- The corrected deficiency is still cited!

Principle #5—Interpretive guidelines
- The Interpretive Guidelines (IG) help the surveyor understand the regulation.
- Cite to the regulation.

Principle #6—Citation of state or local code violations
- State or local code violations are cited under only specific conditions.

Principle #7—Cross-References
- Cross-referring deficiencies strengthens the statement of deficiency; however, each deficiency must be able to “stand alone.”

Principle #8—Condition of Participation Deficiencies
- The findings must support Condition of Participation (CoP) deficiencies.