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Teaching Direct Care Staff

Tips for DD Nurses

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Teaching Direct Care Staff

Registered nurses who work with individuals with developmental disabilities have to work closely with Direct Care staff. It is the responsibility of the RNs to train Direct Care staff so that quality care is provided.

This guide is about the *process* of training Direct Care staff, rather than the *content* of the training.

How can information be relayed so that staff comprehend it?

What teaching strategies can be used to ensure learner understanding?

How can learners be motivated?

These questions are answered with a series of handouts that Registered Nurses can review before they train their staff.

A separate section is also provided on Medication Training, since that is a significant responsibility of Direct Care staff.

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MEDICATION TRAINING

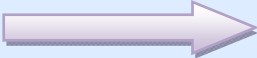
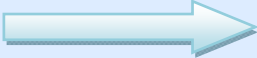
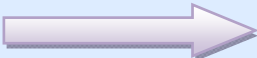
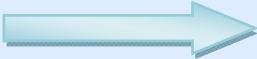
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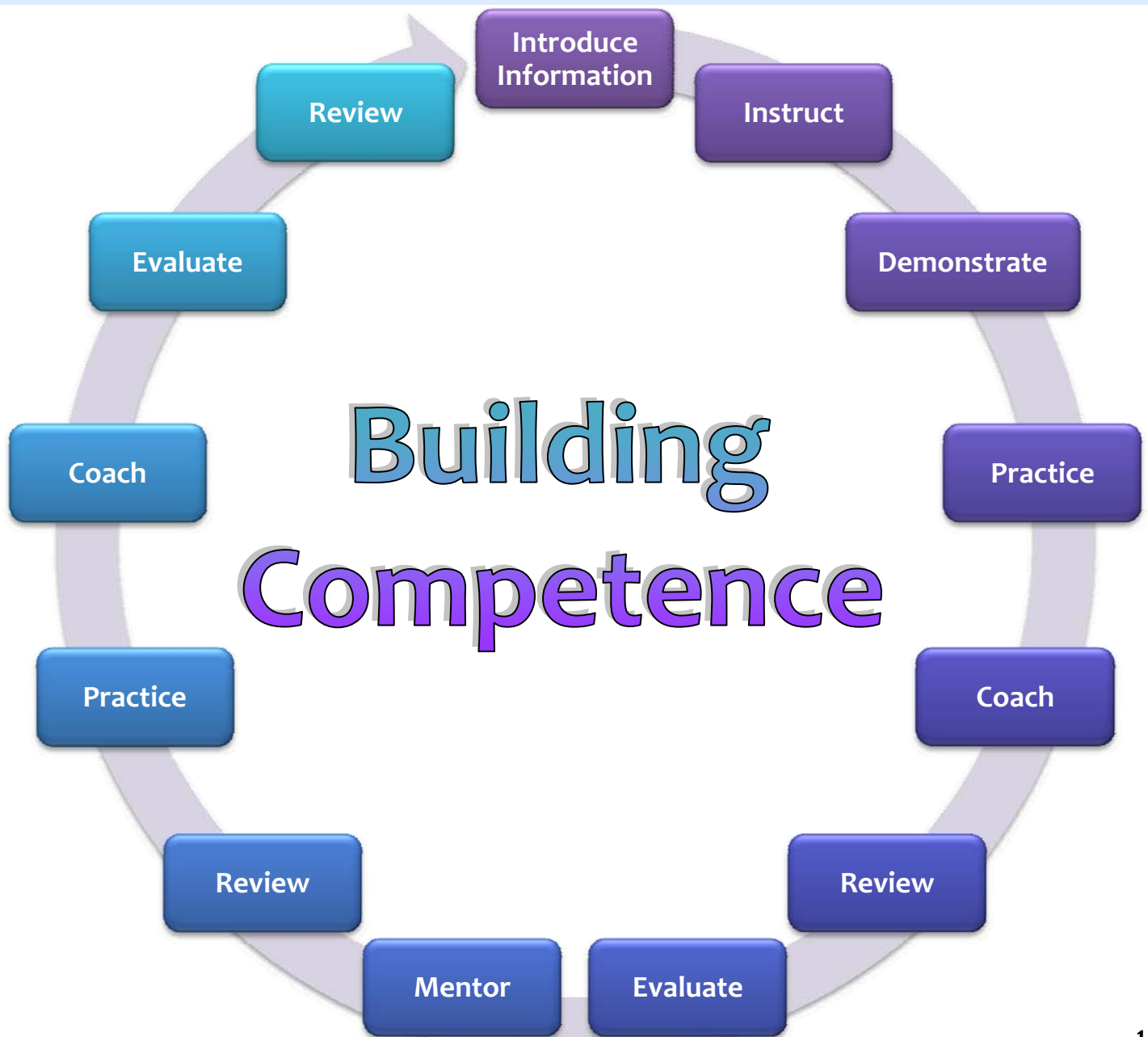


Teaching Tips

Levels of Competence

There are four levels of learner competence:

Novice		need more direction
Competent		need lots of practice
Proficient		need checkups and challenges
Expert		need to mentor and learn new things



How Adults Prefer to Learn

Adults have special needs and requirements as learners.



Respect

Be respectful of life experiences and knowledge.



Reasons

Explain the reasons for learning the new skill.



Practical

Make sure information has a practical application.



Interaction

Build in opportunities for learner interaction.



Hands-On

Involve learners in hands-on activities.



Goals

Help learners to establish goals.



Self-Direction

Encourage independent practice and review.

Knowledge Retention

Activity		Attention Span		Retention
Lecture	➡	Very Short	➡	Very Low
Readings	➡	Short	➡	Low
Watching	➡	Limited	➡	Limited
Question & Answer	➡	Focused	➡	High
Simulation & Role Playing	➡	Very High	➡	High
Staff Demonstrations	➡	Very High	➡	Very High
Reverse (Student) Demonstrations	➡	Very High	➡	Very High
Real Life Practice	➡	Very High	➡	Very High

Teaching Tips

Direct Care staff report that they learn best when their instructors make training:

REAL

SHORT

INTERACTIVE

USEFUL

Real

- Review information through case studies
- Facilitate discussions that include real-life examples
- Keep stressing person-centered care to make information relevant

Short

- Do a quick background review before presenting new information
- Teach information in short presentations that are easy to understand
- Ensure that bilingual staff receive language support

Interactive

- Encourage staff to work together as they learn
- Use reverse demonstration (the employee demonstrates understanding)
- Help staff get to know each other

Useful

- Explain why a topic is being presented
- Describe the big picture, then the details, then the overall picture again
- Provide hard copy handouts

What Learning Style?

Everyone learns in a different way.

You may learn best by watching a demonstration or a video.

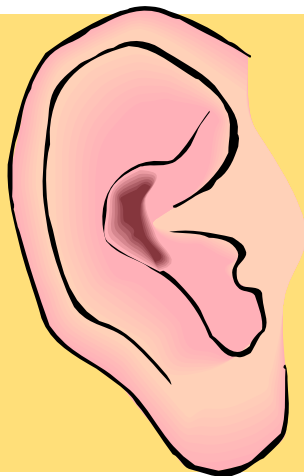
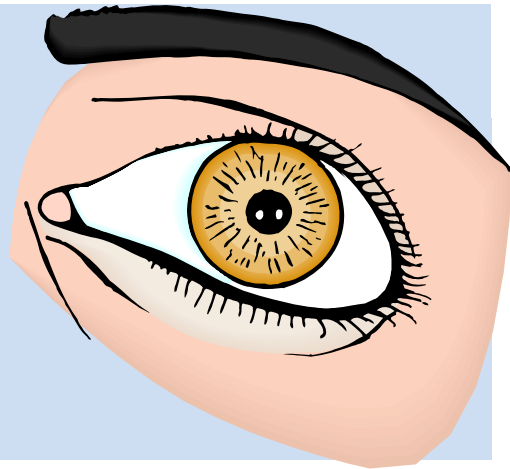
Your co-worker may prefer to dive right in and practice.

When you train Direct Care staff, try to allow for different learning styles.

VISUAL

Need to SEE It!

- observations
- drawings and pictures
- videos
- highlights
- PowerPoints
- flow charts
- video recordings by trainees



AUDITORY

Need to HEAR it!

- discussions
- verbal descriptions
- stories
- conversations in pairs
- lecture
- no noisy distractions
- audio recordings by trainees

KINESTHETIC (TACTILE)

Need to TOUCH it!

- hands-on-practice
- direct care experiences
- role-playing
- simulations
- tours, field trips
- smell, taste experiences
- trainee demonstrations



Learning by Generation

The way that people prefer to learn may depend on the year that they were born!



BOOMERS (born 1946-1964) tend to prefer:

- lots of training and opportunities to learn
- instructor-led activities
- step-by-step, with chances to ask questions
- technology learning: organized by steps



GENERATION X (born 1965-1980) tend to prefer:

- content tied directly to the job
- independent study, lots of takeaways to refer to
- continuous feedback and rewards
- technology learning: interactive, non-linear, quick



GENERATION Y or GENERATION NEXT, ECHO BOOMERS, or MILLENNIALS (born 1981-1995) tend to prefer:

- collaboration
- multiple modalities (class, pairs, labs, computer)
- multi-tasking - with technology handy
- meaningful work but constant change
- own pace, own schedule
- instant feedback
- technology learning: multiple choices and graphics



What's the Question?

One of the best ways to check to see if Direct Care Staff understands instructions is to ask questions. The purpose of asking the questions is to review information, not to make the learners uncomfortable.

Don't hesitate to give hints, guide responses, and provide the answers.

Start with basic knowledge and increase the complexity.*

To assess KNOWLEDGE

Review basic information and immediately ask questions that have a factual response:

- What is this?
- How and when would it be used?

To assess COMPREHENSION

Give examples, comparisons, and explanations, then ask:

- What would you predict?
- What does this mean?

To assess APPLICATION

Provide scenarios, demonstrations, then ask:

- How would you use this information in different circumstances?
- How would you solve this problem?

To assess ANALYSIS

Discuss case studies and real-life care plans, and ask:

- What do you think is happening?
- What is the conclusion that can be drawn?

To assess SYNTHESIS

Practice, role play, and ask learners to demonstrate, then ask:

- What policies were you following?
- What other questions would you ask?

To assess EVALUATION

Present real-life problems and lists of tasks, then ask:

- How would you prioritize?
- How would you know if you did the right thing?

*Bloom's Taxonomy classifies cognitive behavior into a hierarchy of these 6 levels.

Teaching with Cultural Competence



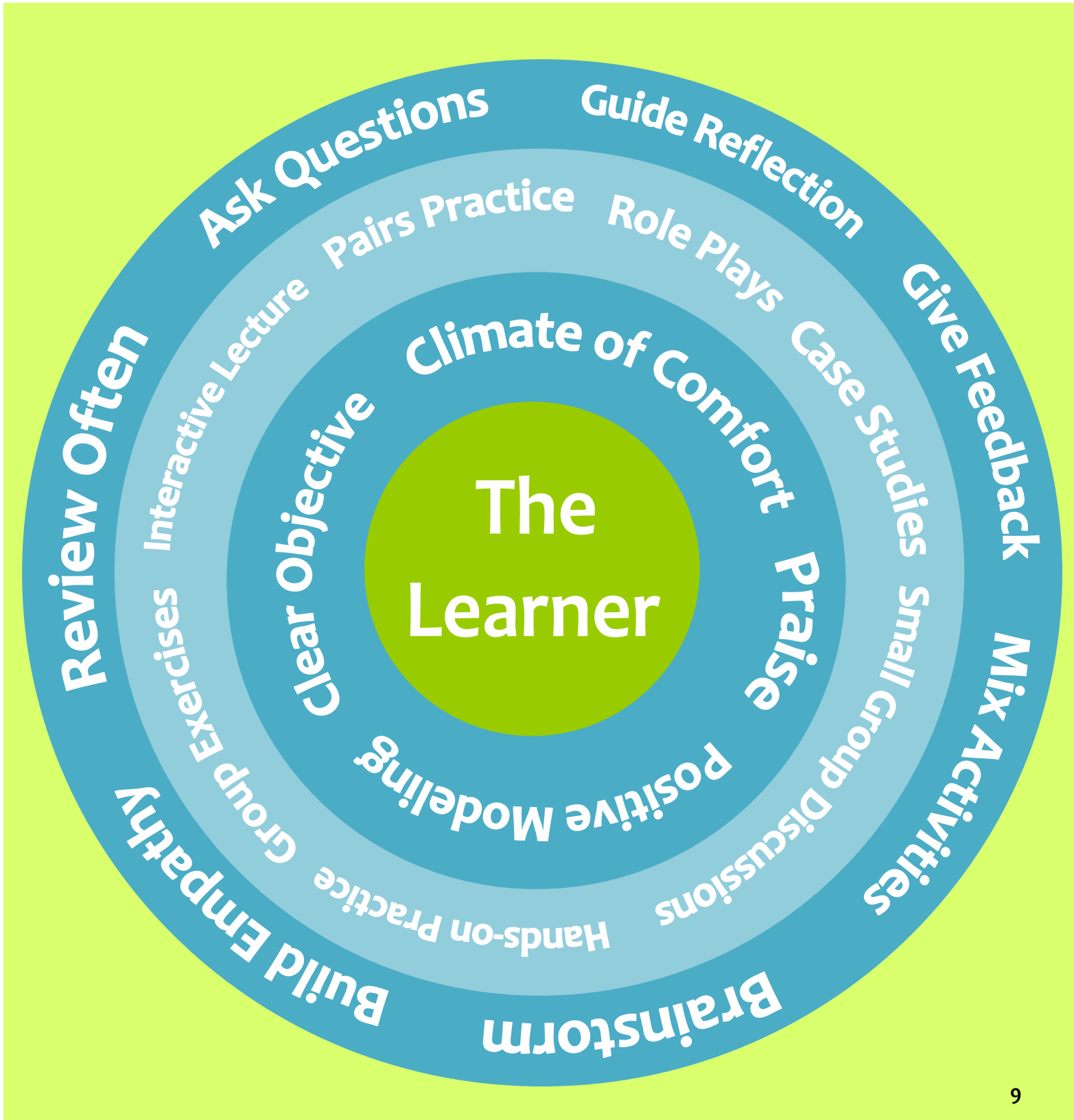
Nurses and other health care professionals have contact with co-workers and patients from a wide spectrum of races, ethnicities, and religions.

The ability to be able to relate to people with different backgrounds, and to teach in a manner that respects cultural traditions, is called **cultural competence**.

DO YOU:

- recognize that when people with different backgrounds and experiences come together, the result is more knowledge?
- assess your own views of different cultures to determine if your views are based on facts?
- show respect for different religious views and cultural traditions?
- provide student-centered instruction, taking into consideration individual cultural needs and concerns?
- remember that a cultural difference doesn't mean a limited capacity to learn?
- use interpreters, visual aids, and bilingual publications to communicate with Direct Care staff as you are training them?
- use training materials that are culturally diverse and free of ethnic stereotypes?
- hold everyone to the same standards?
- seek out professional development to learn more about different cultures?

Put the Learner at the Center



Planning to Teach

You may have an idea about what you need to cover in training, but have you thought about *how* you are going to teach the information?

Identify the content

What exactly do you want the learners to know?

- Identify specific outcomes
- Research evidence-based practices to share
- List vocabulary - new and review

Determine Learning Activities

What is the best way to teach the information?

- Demonstration
- Practice
- Video
- Observation
- Lecture

Gather examples of real-life situations

How can you show how the information is used in real life?

- Case Studies
- Actual nursing care
- Care Plan review

Planning to Teach

Page 2

Gather training materials

What can you use that will be interesting and helpful?

- Equipment
- Handouts
- Audio-visuals
- Regulations

Plan ahead for struggling learners

How will you help learners who don't acquire the skill?

- Practice
- Training review
- Alternative learning method
- Mentor partnership

Decide how to assess competency

How will you know the information has been learned?

- Learner demonstration
- Test
- Actual skill application

How Are You Doing?

When you are teaching Direct Care Staff,
are these training elements included?

- Adult Learner Preferences**
(respect, practical, interaction, hands-on, goals, self-direction)
- Learner at the Center**
- Learning Styles**
(visual, auditory, kinesthetic/tactile)
- Levels of Competence**
(novice, competent, proficient, expert)
- Real and Relevant Information**
- Short, Interactive Activities**
- Generation Learning Preferences**
(Boomers, Generation X and Y)
- Learning Questions**
(knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
- Retention Levels**



Motivating Learners

Motivating Direct Care Staff

Direct Care staff have a lot to learn so they may feel overwhelmed during training and on the job.

What motivates them?
Here's what Direct Care workers say:

PROVIDE

□ Intriguing Information

- real life examples
- facts that can be witnessed

□ Expectations

- clear instructions
- achievable standards

□ Positive Recognition

- praise
- simple rewards

□ Social Experiences

- group activities
- teamwork

□ Breaks in Routine

- changes in activities
- task rotation

□ Opportunities for Growth

- continuing education
- new challenges



Helping New Staff Adjust



Too many Direct Care staff leave their new jobs within the first few months. Here's how to address their top 4 concerns:

Problem: Discomfort

New employees may have limited experience interacting with individuals with developmental disabilities.

Solution:

- Provide a thorough orientation and routine check-ups.
- Immediately discuss misconceptions about individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Discuss anonymous case studies that stress the interests and preferences of individuals.
- Assign mentors and colleagues to assist new employees.

Problem: Frustration

New employees often have difficulty communicating with individuals with developmental disabilities.

Solution:

- Provide clear information about the range of cognitive and physical abilities of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Discuss possible explanations for behavior.
- Explain the importance of a person-centered approach to care.
- Discuss strategies of communication that have worked in the past.

Problem: Learning Problems

New employees may have difficulty comprehending information during training sessions.

Solution:

- Provide training that includes observations and hands-on experiences.
- Identify supports for bilingual staff.
- Employ multiple teaching strategies - not just lecture.
- Review, practice, review.

Problem: Stress

New employees are often adjusting to the pace and demands of a new workplace.

Solution:

- Assist new staff in time management.
- Include stress management strategies in every training session.
- Point out the value of the work that they are doing.
- Express appreciation.

Empowering Direct Care Staff

Direct Care staff can often feel overworked and undervalued. They need to feel empowered -- to have some control over their daily work.

How can you empower Direct Care staff while still supervising?

Begin with incorporating empowerment into instruction.

Encourage Direct Care Staff to:

Make decisions in their daily work

- provide training so quality decisions can be made
- give regular, supportive feedback
- expect accountability

Strengthen relationships with peers and patients

- set up consistent assignments
- consult with staff about their patients
- facilitate person-centered care

Participate on a team

- meet often for staff input
- encourage staff to solve problems together
- model effective communication



Talk to Direct Care Staff

Direct care work can be wonderfully rewarding,
but it can also be challenging.

During training sessions, take a few minutes to talk
about the importance of:

- personal wellness
- managing stress
- practicing patience
- coping with loss
- counseling resources



Remind Direct Care staff that they have to take care
of themselves to be able to take care of others.

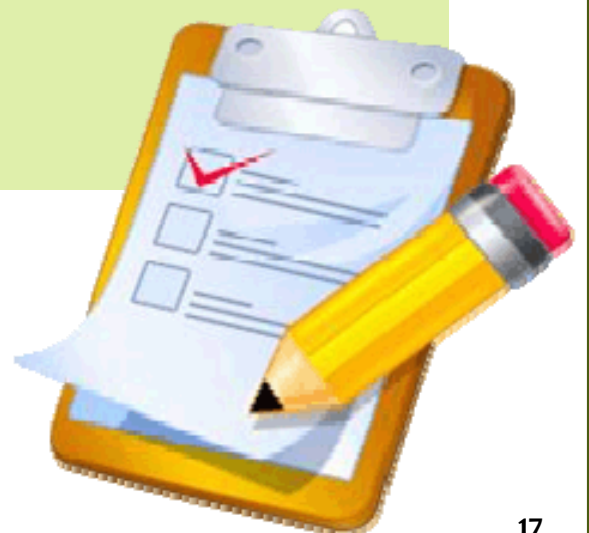
You, too!



Medication Training

Have You Reviewed with Direct Care Staff

- Safe and Efficient Medication Pass
- Safe Storage and Access
- Types of Medication Administration



Patient Medication Administration Rights

Review with Direct Care Staff:

○ RIGHTS OF MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

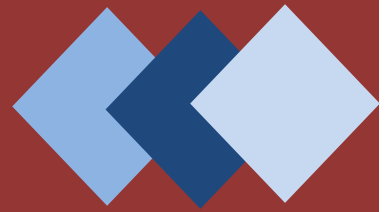
- Right Medication
- Right Dose
- Right Patient
- Right Route
- Right Time
- Right Documentation

○ RIGHTS OF PATIENTS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

- assessment by qualified personnel
- medication history review
- medication name
- labeled medications
- medication purpose
- medication action
- undesired effects
- no unnecessary medications
- refusal of medication
- safe administration
- accurate record-keeping
- medication follow-up



Common Causes



It is possible for a medication error to occur at any level of the health profession. Direct Care staff are often responsible for medication administration, so they are an important step in the medication administration process. Review the common causes of medication errors with Direct Care staff to ensure accurate medication administration.

SPEED OVER SAFETY

- ✓ Confirm the order
- ✓ Check labels and instructions
- ✓ Verify the drug and the patient
- ✓ Check for allergies
- ✓ Check other prescriptions
- ✓ Check the dose and potency
- ✓ Verify abbreviations and notes
- ✓ Ask questions if *any* concerns
- ✓ Write notes clearly
- ✓ Keep an eye on the patient

ADMINISTRATION

- ✓ Learn about medications
- ✓ Be aware of similar drug names
- ✓ Verify best time of day
- ✓ Provide water or food, if required
- ✓ Confirm type of administration
- ✓ Know safe administration processes
- ✓ Be aware of contraindications
- ✓ Understand patient concerns
- ✓ Ask for assistance with some patients
- ✓ Check the area after administration
- ✓ Recognize adverse side effects

DISTRACTIONS

- ✓ Concentrate on the task
- ✓ Review new orders
- ✓ Check packaging changes
- ✓ Be aware of High Alert medications
- ✓ Reassure patient
- ✓ Set personal issues aside

**Follow Safe
Procedures
Every Time**

Medication Errors

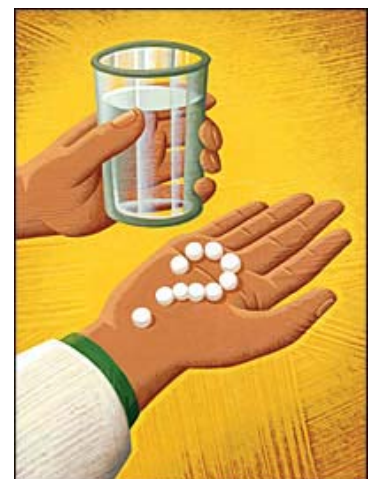
Direct Care Staff should be aware of how to avoid medication errors.

Does Direct Care Staff Know:

- organizational policies for checking and renewing meds?
- how to chart or use electronic record systems?
- what to do if orders are illegible, ambiguous, or confusing?
- how orders should be transcribed?
- how to evaluate the order for individual patients?
- side effects and contraindications of medications?
- the rights of medication administration?
- HIPAA regulations for medication administration?
- common causes of medication errors?

Did You Discuss with Direct Care Staff how to:

- observe for changes in behavior when psychotropic medications are prescribed?
- monitor laboratory screenings?
- communicate with caregivers?



SBAR

A modified form of the SBAR system is commonly used for Direct Care Staff to communicate information to registered nurses. Direct Care Staff either record or verbally report the four components: **S**ituation, **B**ackground, **A**ssessment, and **R**ecommendation/**R**equest.

Regardless of the communication system that your agency uses, review the components of SBAR so that Direct Care Staff can provide information that is organized and useful.

S = SITUATION

- Who is the patient?
- What problem or situation are you observing?
- What medical situation has changed?
- What prompted you to make a special report?

B = BACKGROUND

- Age, gender, and other basic data?
- What is the pertinent medical history?
- What medications - particularly new medications?
- What change in function are you observing?
- What change in behavior are you observing?

A = ASSESSMENT

- What do you think is going on with the patient?
- Who has been consulted?

R = RECOMMENDATION/REQUEST

- What is needed?
- What are you recommending or requesting?

Sample Training Topics

There are a number of training topics that should be covered with Direct Care staff. Some of the topics are offered in formal professional development programs, but all of them should be discussed on a routine basis with staff. Check off the topics that may need a refresher.

- Developmental Disabilities
- Confidentiality
- Abuse and Neglect
- Emergency Procedures
- Cultural Competence
- Infection Control
- Quality Improvement
- Environmental Safety
- Falls and Accident Prevention
- Caring for Mobility Needs
- Terminology & Codes
- Nutrition
- Food Handling and Sanitation
- Behavior Management
- Personal Hygiene
- Documentation
- Consumer/Resident Rights
- Communicating with Caregivers
- Fire Safety
- Communicable Diseases
- Medication Administration
- Recreation and Socialization
- Personal Care and Dignity
- Evacuation Procedures
- Incident Reporting
- Gerontology
- ADLs and IADLs
- Dementia
- Mental Illnesses
- Cognitive Impairments
- Universal Precautions
- Hazard Prevention