

NC Department of Health and Human Services  
**NC Nurse Aide I Curriculum**

**Module U**  
Mental Health and Mental Illness  
July 2019

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**Objectives**

- Explain the role of the nurse aide in the de-escalation of the resident who is agitated.
- Describe anxiety disorders
- Describe mood disorders

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**Mental Health and Mental Illness**

- Mental health – ability to cope with and adjust to everyday stresses in ways that society accepts
- Mental illness – disturbance in the ability to cope or adjust to stress
- De-escalate – to cause to become less dangerous or difficult

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**Mental Health and Mental Illness – Importance**

- Great day-to-day relationships are the heart of de-escalation
- Know what is normal
- Signs resident is becoming agitated

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**Causes of Mental Illness**

**Contributing Factors**

- Physical Factors
- Environmental Factors
- Heredity
- Stress

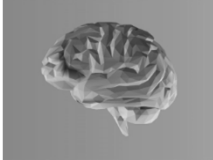


Image of Human Brain

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**Anxiety Disorders**

**Anxiety Disorders**

- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Phobia




Image – example of an uneasy older adult

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**Mood Disorders**

**Disorders**

- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia




Image – example of a sad older adult

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**Mental Health and Mental Illness Treatment**

- Medication
- Psychotherapy
- Cognitive behavioral therapy

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**Mental Health and Mental Illness – Nurse Aide’s Role**

- Important for nurse aide to recognize inappropriate behavior:
  - Report to nurse
  - De-escalate behaviors
- Nurse aide has many chances to observe and to get to know resident

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**De-escalation of a Resident Who is Agitated – Nurse Aide’s Role**

- First and only objective in de-escalation is to reduce level and intensity of resident behavior so that discussion becomes possible

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**De-escalation of a Resident Who is Agitated – Nurse Aide’s Role (1)**

- Behavior
- Posture
- Position self for safety
- Body movement and language
- Facial expression

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**De-escalation of a Resident Who is Agitated – Nurse Aide’s Role (2)**

- Eye contact
- Attitude
- Tone
- Responses
- Reasoning

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**De-escalation of a Resident Who is Agitated – Nurse Aide’s Role (4)**

- Trust instincts – if de-escalation is not working, the nurse aide should STOP and calmly call for help

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**De-escalation of a Resident Who is Agitated – Nurse Aide’s Role (5)**

- Control the environment
- Look for meaning of the behavior
- Check for underlying causes
- Respond in person’s reality

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**Points to Remember (1)**

- Residents are more than a diagnosis
- Recognize that a person with a mental illness is an individual with a unique background and life experience
- Each resident diagnosed with a mental illness is different from other residents with same diagnosis

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**Points to Remember (2)**

- **All behavior has meaning – looking for the meaning behind the behavior is key**
- **Resident may not be doing things on purpose**
- **Nurse aides can successfully handle situations when a resident is stressed and agitated by using proper communication skills**

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**Points to Remember (3)**

- **When unusual or inappropriate behavior escalates resident may be a danger**
- **Nursing care plan includes specific details**
- **Important tool is de-escalation**
- **Great day-to-day relationships are at the heart of de-escalation**

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