Objectives

- Define pain
- Explain the role of the nurse aide in pain management

Pain - Definition

“Anything the patient says it is, occurring whenever the patient says it does.”
Pain - Importance
Believing what the patient says will lead to more effective evaluations and treatment of pain

Pain - Acute Pain
• Temporary, lasts for a few hours, or, at most, up to six months
• Usually comes on suddenly, as a result of disease, inflammation or injury
• Goes away when the healing process is complete

Pain - Facts
• Pain may come with aging, but people do not have to live with it
• Pain is significantly under-reported in nursing facilities
• In nursing homes, many experience pain
• Nurse aides commonly underestimate pain
• Under rating and under-treating pain can be neglect, negligence, or abuse
• Nursing homes that do not manage pain properly will be cited
Pain - Description

- Aching
- Burning
- Dull
- Radiating
- Sharp
- Shooting
- Stabbing
- Throbbing

Pain – Acute Pain

- Serves a purpose - warns the body of a problem that needs attention
- Identifying and treating the cause of acute pain is usually possible
- When people are in acute pain, their discomfort tends to be obvious
- Acute pain may cause pale sweaty skin, increase in heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure

Reactions to Pain

- Religious beliefs and cultural traditions affect pain
- Men and women may report pain differently
- Commonly held beliefs about opioids
Chronic Pain

- Considered long-term
- Gradual onset – occurs over a period of weeks or months
- Diagnosing cause can be complicated
- Source of chronic pain may not be obvious
- May not have a purpose

Common Causes of Pain

- Arthritis
- Cancers
- Ischemic pain
- Neuropathic pain
- Phantom limb pain

Pain – Effects (1)

- Giving up hope
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Change in appetite
- Decrease in activities
- Inability to sleep
Pain – Effects (2)

• Restlessness/agitation
• Refusal to participate
• Suicide
• Negative effect on the immune system
• May be at higher risk for injuries, falls, or accidents

Pain – Use of Medications

• Nurse aide reports complaints of pain to nurse
• Nurse assesses and medicates if appropriate

Pain – Nurse Aide’s Role in Management

• Nurse Aides play an important role in pain management
• At bedside and often the people most likely to notice when a resident is acting differently or showing signs of pain
• Should take an active role in pain management
When to Ask Residents About Pain (1)

- During personal care
- During transfers and ambulation
- Following activities
- At appropriate times after pain management therapies

When to Ask Residents About Pain (2)

- Are you in pain, uncomfortable, hurting?
- Where is the pain? Ask the resident to point to the area.
- How bad is the pain? Pain scales: use the one available at the facility (examples – 0 - 10 Numeric Rating Scale, Wong-Baker Faces Pain Rating Scale)
- Do you remember what you were doing when the pain started?

Comfort Measures – Nurse Aide’s Role (1)

- Warm or cold packs
- Massage
- Re-positioning
- Soothing activities
- Prayer and spiritual support
Comfort Measures – Nurse Aide’s Role (2)

- Supportive talk
- Gentle touch
- Music
- Soft lighting
- Decreased noise

Comfort Measures – Nurse Aide’s Role (3)

- Listening and conversation
- Favorite foods or drinks
- Help with personal cleanliness
- A walk
- Reminiscing

Care of the Resident Who is Cognitively Impaired and in Pain

- Observe for signs of pain
- Report observations
- When something works, let others know
- Works as a team with others