

# Module 23 – Stress Management for Home Care Aides

## Introduction

The role of the home care aide can be demanding. The demands are both physical and emotional. It is important that the home care aide remain healthy to continue to provide care to individuals in their homes. This module will allow you to evaluate your own stress level and provide suggestions to decrease stress.

## Objectives

At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to:

1. Explain why home care aides might experience stress
2. Identify symptoms of burnout or compassion fatigue
3. List several stress reduction techniques

## Instructional Resource Materials

- Power Point for Module 23 – Stress Management for Home Care Aides
- Handouts/Activity
- **Prior to class, print the ProQOL pocket card.** There are four cards per page. Print enough cards so each student receives one. Cut the cards apart and distribute to class. The card can be folded along the dark line on the card.
- Suggested Activity – consider a guest speaker from a local business's Employee Assistance Counseling Program (EACP) to discuss the importance of self-care and burnout/compassion fatigue. EACP is a program often provided by large healthcare organizations.

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Slides	Instructor's Script	Notes
<b>Slide 1</b> Title Slide	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module 23 – Stress Management for Home Care Aides</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 2</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objectives</b> - At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain why home care aides might experience stress</li> <li>2. Identify symptoms of burnout or compassion fatigue</li> <li>3. List several stress reduction techniques</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 3</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being in a care giving profession such as a home care aide can have many sources of stress. Dealing with ill, and – at times – dying patients can be a challenge.</li> <li>• Likewise, demands on the home care aide's body, mind, and emotions can be quite overwhelming. Some home care aides also experience anxiety over a lack of control over their patient's care. Often the patient is not receiving all the care they need, adding burden to those who are trying to provide care.</li> <li>• Caring for someone else can be physically challenging. Bathing, lifting, moving the patient, etc., can be exhausting, as well as dangerous if you are distracted or careless. Being a home care aide demands focus and attention, which can be draining to exert so much mental energy into patients or tasks, day in and day out.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 4</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many home care aides gain a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction when they can help their patients. However, at times challenges and stress seem to outweigh the positives, leading to a feeling of fatigue and disillusionment.</li> <li>• Caregiver burnout or compassion fatigue can happen to any type of person or in any profession that involves helping others – daycare provider, physician, nurse, home care aide, social worker, mental health professional, etc.</li> <li>• Burnout and compassion fatigue are more than feelings of stress at work. They encompass the physical, emotional, and/or spiritual exhaustion that can seem to take over a person. It can affect one's ability to experience personal joy or feel and care for others.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 5</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burnout is usually a gradual lessening of sensitivity or compassion over time. A few symptoms include</li> </ul>	

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	<p>hopelessness, anxiety, decreased pleasure in day-to-day life, and an apparent chronic negative attitude.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Productivity at work decreases, focus is affected, and a home care aide can feel incompetent and doubtful of their abilities.</li> <li>• It is easy to get emotionally involved with patients whom you care for, however when their stressors and problems become your stressors and problems, this can lead to the home care aide's taking on the emotional burden of a patient. Without even realizing it, the home care aide can show signs and symptoms of burnout or compassion fatigue.</li> <li>• People carry burden and stress many ways. Symptoms of burnout and compassion fatigue can have a gradual onset.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 6</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Handout #1 – Symptoms of Burnout – Faculty:</b> go over handout with students. Ask questions such as have they ever experienced those symptoms when caring for an especially difficult patient? Do they know someone else who may be experiencing those feelings? Are there other symptoms they can think of? Are there any symptoms that they have experienced and wonder if they are related to burnout?</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 7</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the workplace, these symptoms can affect relationships with co-workers and supervisors, as well as job performance. Symptoms of burnout may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High absenteeism</li> <li>○ Inability to work in teams or groups</li> <li>○ Desire to break company rules</li> <li>○ Outbursts of aggression</li> <li>○ Inability to complete assignments</li> <li>○ Lack of flexibility</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptoms of burnout may include (continued): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inability to respect other staff or meet deadlines</li> <li>○ Negativism toward workplace or management</li> <li>○ Reluctance toward change</li> <li>○ Lack of positive vision for the future</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Since many home care agencies are small, additional challenges such as low wages, small spaces, and high turnover can add to the negative atmosphere.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 9</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is most at risk of developing burnout or compassion fatigue? <b>ANYONE!</b> Although those in the health care and mental health professions are at</li> </ul>	

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	<p>greatest risk, there is no specific type of person who will experience this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming fatigued or emotionally drained is normal and does not mean that you are doing anything wrong.</li> <li>• The fact that you can show sympathy and be empathetic is due to traits that drew you to a helping profession. However, as important as it is to take care of your patients, it is equally important to take care of yourself.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 10</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home care aides often do not take the time for themselves that they truly need and deserve. Getting help with burnout or compassion fatigue will give you the physical and emotional energy needed to do your daily activities – both personally and professionally.</li> <li>• There is nothing to feel embarrassed or guilty about. Chances are you have friends or co-workers who have experienced similar feelings at some point. They were hesitant to talk about it, too.</li> <li>• Think about your own personal stresses – childcare, finances, etc. Having a plan to deal with your own personal stresses will help to alleviate some stress that you may feel with your job.</li> <li>• You and your feelings are important. Working through burnout and fatigue will only better you as an individual and a home care aide.</li> <li>• Ignoring your feelings or problems will not make them go away. Becoming better attuned to your body’s response to stress can teach you what your limits are, and at what point you need a break to deal with the stressors of caring for others in the future.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 11</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here are some tips to try to help you reduce stress and try to stay healthy while you are providing home care for your patients. Likewise, these tips will help to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue as well.</li> <li>• <b>Handout #2 – Stress Reduction</b> – Faculty: go over list with students or have the students read the list independently. Do they have other stress reducing techniques they would like to share? How difficult/easy are these to do? Other thoughts/class discussion?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 12</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity #1 - PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (ProQOL) Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)</b></li> <li>• Faculty – hand out the first page of the ProQOL. This is a brief assessment regarding compassion satisfaction and fatigue. Have the students work alone to answer</li> </ul>	

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	<p>the questions. Remind the students that it is only for them to see. Therefore, they should be as honest and candid as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After they finish the quiz, pass out the scoring page. Have each student score their quiz.</li><li>• Pass out results page and review. Discuss the quiz and ask for thoughts, perceptions, surprises, etc.</li><li>• <b>ProQOL Pocket Card.</b> Instructors: Hand out one card to each student. Briefly review card with students. Explain that the card can be kept with them in their pocket to remind them to take care of themselves.</li></ul>	
<b>Slide 13</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be sure to also voice any concerns or stressful issues/situations to your supervisor. You do not need to carry a burden by yourself, and your supervisor will be able to give you guidance and help with your stressful situation.</li></ul>	