NC Department of Health and Human Services

NC Nurse Aide I Curriculum

Module U
Mental Health and Mental Illness
July 2019
Objectives

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

Contributing Factors

- Physical Factors
- Environmental Factors
- Heredity
- Stress

Image of Human Brain
Anxiety Disorders

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

Image – example of an uneasy older adult
Mood Disorders

Disorders

• Depression
• Bipolar Disorder
• Schizophrenia

Image – example of a sad older adult
Mental Health and Mental Illness Treatment

• Medication
• Psychotherapy
• Cognitive behavioral therapy
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
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
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
De-escalation of a Resident Who is Agitated – Nurse Aide’s Role (2)

• Eye contact
• Attitude
• Tone
• Responses
• Reasoning
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
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
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
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
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