NC Department of Health and Human Services

NC Nurse Aide I Curriculum

Module V
Pain

July 2019
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