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 - Description

• Aching
• Burning
• Dull
• Radiating
• Sharp
• Shooting
• Stabbing
• Throbbing
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
*Reactions to Pain*

- Religious beliefs and cultural traditions affect pain
- Men and women may report pain differently
- Commonly held beliefs about opioids
*Pain – Acute Pain (1)

- 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 – Acute Pain (2)**

- 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
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
• Thoughts of suicide and/or 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 (2)*

- Supportive talk
- Gentle touch
- Music
- Soft lighting
- Decreased noise
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 (3)

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