



# 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**