



...Developing top-notch CNAs, one inservice at a time



A Client Care Module for Nurse Aides:

Building Trust & Confidence with Your Clients



Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time

A Client Care Module:
Building Trust & Confidence with Your Clients

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WRAP YOUR GIFT!

Building trust and confidence with your clients is as easy as wrapping a beautiful package . . . and the gift is **YOU!**

Each day you *give yourself* to your clients. You give your knowledge and your experience. You give your time and your attention.

But, if you want the gift to be received and appreciated, you have to wrap it up and adorn it with ribbons and bows!

- **Genuineness** is your gift wrap.
- **Respect** is the ribbon.
- **Empathy** is the bow!



When you present yourself to your clients with genuineness, respect, and empathy, you will gain their trust and confidence in the relationship.

Why is building trust so important?
It's all about *personal space!*

Everyone has an invisible zone that tells people how far or how close you should be when communicating. Most people feel comfortable with these zones:

- **Social or public space** (4 feet or more). This is usually for strangers or very casual acquaintances.
- **Personal space** (1.5 to 4 feet). This is usually for friends.
- **Intimate space** (0 to 18 inches). This is usually reserved for intimate partners or close family.

Frequently, as a CNA you must **intrude** on your client's **intimate space**. It's uncomfortable for you both! But, when you set the tone and build the relationship on trust and confidence, you minimize the discomfort and maximize the therapeutic effect!

Keep reading to learn how you can build trust and confidence with your clients and why it is so important!

WHAT'S NEW?

Grab your favorite highlighter! As you read this inservice, **highlight five things** you learn that you didn't know before. Share this new information with your co-workers!



ESTABLISH THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

The first time you meet a client you establish the tone of the relationship. You do this with the words you choose, your body language, and your professionalism. Although your bond with your client may change over time, your goal is to maintain a “therapeutic relationship.”

What is a therapeutic relationship? ***Here is a comparison of different types of relationships you may have in your life:***

	SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP	INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP	THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP
PURPOSE	Friendship. Meets each person’s need for socialization.	Meets each partner’s emotional needs.	Meets the <u>client’s</u> physical and emotional needs.
GOALS	Socialization, companionship, sharing of ideas.	Emotional connection. Short and long term goals are shared and pursued together.	<u>The client’s needs</u> are identified and a plan is developed and implemented.
WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT?	There is sharing of selected personal information and giving and receiving of advice.	Deeper personal and more intimate information is shared.	Solutions to the <u>client’s problems</u> are discussed and the plan to meet the <u>client’s needs</u> is negotiated.
OUTCOME	The need for socialization is met.	Emotional satisfaction, security, procreation.	The <u>client’s physical and emotional needs</u> are met. The client develops new coping skills and may achieve a new level of independence.

It’s easy to blur the line between these types of relationships when you spend a great deal of time with your clients and their families. You may learn personal or intimate information and you may be tempted to share personal information about yourself. But, remember . . . your goal is to maintain a ***therapeutic relationship***.

CLEAR BOUNDARIES ENHANCE TRUST

Setting boundaries *early* in your therapeutic relationship will help you build trust.

To set clear boundaries at the beginning of a therapeutic relationship, try the following:

- Describe exactly what you **can** and **will** do in order to help your client reach the goals outlined in the plan of care.
- Keep the relationship focused on the *client’s* needs . . . not your own needs.
- Limit personal information you disclose about yourself.

See page 4 for more do’s and don’ts for setting boundaries!

“We’re never so vulnerable as when we trust someone—but, if we cannot trust, neither can we find love or joy.”

~Walter Anderson

PERSONAL TRAITS THAT BUILD TRUST

GENUINENESS

Being genuine means you are open, honest, and sincere in your interactions with clients. Genuineness requires you to be aware of what you are thinking and feeling and to express your thoughts and feelings when appropriate.

Genuineness does not mean you have to say everything you are thinking!

- For example, you may think your client's son is lazy and rude . . . but there is no therapeutic benefit to expressing that to your client.
- Instead, you might say, "It makes me uncomfortable and a little sad to hear him speak to you that way." Then follow that up with an offer to contact the nurse or social worker if you suspect abuse.



EMPATHY

Having empathy means you understand your client's feelings accurately. You convey understanding to the client and act on this understanding in a helpful way.

The best way to understand empathy is to compare it to sympathy, like this:

- **Empathy** is the intellectual and emotional awareness of another person's thoughts and feelings. Empathy focuses on understanding and is useful in therapeutic relationships.
- **Sympathy** involves sharing another's feelings, especially in sorrow or trouble through imagining what the other person must feel. Sympathy emphasizes sharing and is useful in social and intimate relationships.

RESPECT

You will gain your clients' trust and confidence when you demonstrate respect for them, their family members, your workplace, and yourself.

Having respect means you recognize that each individual is unique and has worth, regardless of socio-economic status or personal attributes.

You show that you have respect for yourself by dressing appropriately and taking care of your own health. Having respect for yourself requires you to have a **positive self regard**. This means you know yourself, you like yourself, you are aware of your flaws, and you work toward constant improvement.

See the "Trust Yourself" boxes on the next few pages for tips on developing a positive self regard!



Developing Positive Self-Regard!

TIP #1

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

If you can't tell *yourself* the truth, you probably can't be honest in other relationships in your life. And, people who are dishonest cannot be trusted.

If there is something in your life that is not working (love life, kids, finances), be honest with yourself about what you are doing to help or hurt the situation.

Hiding from the truth only makes the pain last longer. Be honest with yourself—make a positive change—and move on!

THINK



about it!

Look up the word "genuineness" in a dictionary or go online and "Google" it. It's a difficult idea to define. Write a definition for genuineness in your own words. Then, answer these questions:

- **How can you tell when someone is being genuine with you? How does it make you feel?**
- **Are you completely genuine in every relationship? Why or why not? If not, how do you think this effects your ability to gain trust?**
- **Why do you think it's hard for some people to be genuine?**

"Trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement."

~Golda Meir
(Former Israeli Prime Minister)

BOUNDARIES IN A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP

Boundaries help build trust in a therapeutic relationship because they let both you and the client know exactly what to expect.

HERE ARE SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR SETTING BOUNDARIES:

DO:

- Explain to the client exactly what you can and will do as you work toward the goals outlined in the plan of care.
- Address your client by the name the client prefers.
- Listen to the concerns of the family and act on those concerns when appropriate.
- Allow room for negotiation and encourage independence within the limits of the care plan.
- Help your client understand when requests are beyond the limits of the therapeutic relationship.
- Avoid accepting gifts unless the refusal could harm the therapeutic relationship. For example, let's say your client bakes you cookies to express her appreciation for your hard work. Refusing the cookies could insult the client and cause her to withdraw.



DO NOT:

- Call your client pet names like Sweetie, Sugar, or Honey.
- Perform any action that is out of your scope of practice or that you have not been trained to do.
- Perform personal services such as giving rides to family members or picking up dry cleaning unless it is outlined in your contract.
- Accept gifts of cash or other expensive items.
- Disclose personal information about your life. This includes your personal or intimate relationships, family troubles, legal problems, and financial problems.
 - Discuss your feelings about your employer, co-workers or other clients in the presence of the client or their family members.
 - Become romantically involved with any client or client's family member even after the therapeutic relationship has ended.



Developing Positive Self-Regard!

TIP #2

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR MISTAKES

You may believe it weakens you to admit when you've made a mistake, but that could not be farther from the truth!

When you try to hide or cover up a mistake—the guilt will gnaw at you and, over time, weakens your spirit.

If you make a mistake, acknowledge it right away. Do what you can to reverse any effects of your mistake. Apologize with sincerity. Accept any criticism you receive as a result. Learn from your mistake. And, then move on!

THE NEXT



STEP!

Apply what you learned!

Read the quote by Maya Angelou in the box just to the right.

- *Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?*
- *Is Maya Angelou implying that your words and actions don't matter? Or, is she saying that you should choose words and actions that leave people feeling good?*
- *How do you make sure your clients feel good about the care you provide?*
- *How do you gain your client's trust and confidence?*
- *Share your answers with your co-workers and find out their thoughts on the matter.*

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

~Maya Angelou

COMMUNICATION THAT BUILDS TRUST

- **It's not just what you say...it's how you say it.** Let your client know you care through your tone of voice, facial expressions, words, and gestures.
- **Listen with sensitivity.** Never interrupt, cut the person off or tune out what is being said, even if it sounds like gibberish or nonsense.
- **Listen for meaning.** Take time to find out what the problem is.
- **Get involved.** Show interest when your clients talk about positive things as well as negative things or problems in his or her life.
- **Listen thoughtfully.** Your client may feel comfortable sharing stories or experiences from life. Communicate appreciation for sharing.
- **Accept your client "as is."** Avoid judgment even if you disagree with certain behaviors or choices your client makes. There is something good in EVERYONE. Find the good in your client and focus on that!



- **Focus on the human—not the task.** Slow down and talk calmly and casually while you provide care.
- **Make adjustments for vision impairments.** Provide more light for clients with vision problems. Avoid standing too close so that you don't get blurry. Stay *in front* of the person where you can be seen.
- **Help the hearing impaired.** Make sure hearing aids are in and batteries are fresh! If you need to talk louder, try to lower your tone of voice. Decrease excessive environmental noise when possible.
- **Speak clearly and concisely.** Avoid slang words and medical jargon that may be unfamiliar to older clients.
- **Be patient.** Give older clients extra time to answer your questions or tell you what they have to say. Reaction time slows as people age.
 - **Be open to criticism.** Accept criticism and complaints with grace. Avoid disagreeing, retaliating, or withdrawing. Apologize and explain what you were thinking or experiencing if a misunderstanding occurs.



Developing Positive Self-Regard!

TIP #3

STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

There are many injustices in the world. Some big, some small. But, when you witness something that feels wrong—or someone or something is being harmed—stand up and speak out. You may be the only one brave enough to make a difference.

You may be showered with praise for your efforts. Or, you may never see any positive results. Either way, it's the action of standing up for what you believe to be right that matters. You are the only one who needs to know that you did the right thing!



Touch can communicate trust, hope, empathy, and reassurance to your client without ever saying a word!

- The research is clear: touch relieves pain, decreases stress, and increases circulation. It can help clients endure serious illness and even provides comfort and reassurance to dying clients.
- If you're not sure how to use touch, start by touching a client's hand or arm during easy conversation. A touch on the arm tells your client she is not alone and she will be listened to.
- If your client seems uncomfortable with touch, try a *planned* form of touch such as a back rub, or foot or hand massage to help to break down barriers against touch.

"To be trusted is a greater compliment than being loved."

~George MacDonald

BARRIERS TO TRUSTING COMMUNICATION

BARRIER	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Judging	Giving the impression that you don't like or disapprove of what the client is saying or doing.	Rolling eyes, loud sighing, saying, "I don't like that," or "That's not right."
Blaming	Accusing the client of some wrong doing.	Saying, "You should know better than to try to go to the bathroom with out help," or "If you would just follow my rules you wouldn't have fallen."
Belittling the client's feelings	Indicating to the client that his feelings are inappropriate or unreasonable.	Saying, "You shouldn't feel that way," or "There's no reason to cry."
Rejecting	Refusing to discuss certain topics.	Saying, "Let's not talk about that," or "It's not my problem; you need to talk to the nurse about that."
Probing	Pressuring a client to discuss something she is uncomfortable talking about.	Asking personal questions about spouse, children, or other family members, like, "Why are you so angry with your daughter?"
Defending	Making comments intending to protect yourself or someone else.	Saying, "I never said that," or "I'm sure your son didn't mean to hurt your feelings."
Reassuring	Giving false hope or indicating that a client's concerns or fears are unnecessary.	Stating, "Everything is going to be fine," or "You'll feel better real soon."



Developing Positive Self-Regard!

TIP #4

SET GOALS AND ACHIEVE THEM

Setting goals for yourself helps keep your life on track. It shows others you have a plan and you're moving forward.

Goals can be short term or long term. For example, a long term goal may be to go to college and get a degree. A short term goal may be as simple as getting to work on time or eating a healthy breakfast each morning.

Write down your goals and hold yourself accountable for achieving them. Don't let yourself off the hook! You can do it!

TALK



about it!

Open the Discussion

In a therapeutic relationship, "talking" with clients should always focus on the client's needs, activities, and situation.

Although you may chat socially with clients, it's important to keep the focus on the client. Never disclose or discuss *personal problems* or *your own needs* with your client.

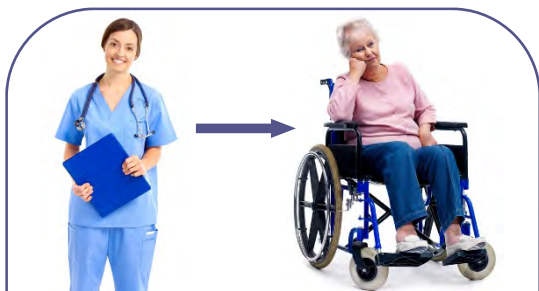
Some employers offer staff support groups, counseling, or other resources to help you cope with personal issues.

- **Ask your supervisor if your workplace has a program in place for you and your co-workers. If not, request one!**

"No soul is desolate as long as there is a human being for whom it can feel trust and reverence."

~T.S. Eliot

THE STAGES OF A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP



STAGE 1: THE BEGINNING

- Introduce yourself and describe what you will do to help the client reach the goals in the plan of care.
- Be friendly and genuine. Allow time for your client to ask questions.
- Be sure your client knows how to reach you and when you will return.



STAGE 2: TRUST DEVELOPS

- Trust will begin to develop as you define the relationship and set clear boundaries.
- Demonstrate respect through actions and words.
- Convey genuineness and empathy.



STAGE 3: BONDING OCCURS

- The bond forms and strengthens when there is mutual trust and respect.
- Work together to meet the client's goals and build confidence.



STAGE 4: THE END

- In the end, the client will have increased strength and self confidence.
- Offer praise for meeting goals.
- Allow time for client to express fear or anxiety about the separation.
- Don't make false promises to visit the client after discharge. This will only lead to disappointment.



Developing Positive Self-Regard!

TIP #5

RESPECT YOURSELF

Respect yourself by dressing appropriately for each situation. Present yourself to the world with dignity and grace.

Speak to others in a way that your *grandmother* would approve of!

Respect your body by eating right, getting exercise, and plenty of rest.

If you smoke . . . quit! It's killing you!

Take care of your finances. Live within your means. Save a little each week for your future. You're going to need it!

CONNECT It Now!



Apply what you know

Think about a client you have cared for in the past and recall how the relationship developed through each of the stages described above.

- **What was your client's mood or disposition the first day you met?**
- **How or when did you know your client stopped seeing you as a stranger and began to trust you?**
- **How did you say goodbye when the relationship ended?**

"Those who trust us, educate us."

~George Eliot

BUILDING TRUST WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

When you care for a client, you often have family members around who want to know what's going on and how they can help.

Families may experience a great deal of stress in response to a loved one's illness, particularly if it is very serious and/or long lasting.

Family members may have additional anxiety related to finances, family role strain, and time constraints related to taking on additional responsibilities the sick person used to do.

- **Make time to talk to the client's family.** Ask the family about the client. Family members may have useful information about your client's likes and dislikes, routines and preferences.
- **Do not lie to the family.** If they want to know more than you can tell them, encourage them to talk with the doctor. Recommend making a list of questions so they will be sure not to forget anything.



- **Give brief but positive reports.** If a family member must leave, offer a brief description of what happened while the client was left in your care. For example, you might tell the family member that the client, "took a little nap and ate some lunch" or, "While you were out, the doctor came for a visit. I can get the nurse to come talk to you about what happened during the visit."
- **Answer family member's questions simply but clearly.** If they want more information than you can give them, offer to call the nurse or doctor.
- **Offer support and comfort.** Remember, this is a very stressful time for the family. Expressions of empathy will help the family feel supported and confident. You might say, "It must be really hard to see your wife so sick." or, "I understand how hard this can be. I'm here if you need to talk."
 - **Involve the willing!** If a family member wishes to help, give instructions on providing daily care, such as bathing, grooming, turning and repositioning, and changing wet or soiled briefs or bedding.



Developing Positive Self-Regard!

TIP #6

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT

At the end of each day, take some time to think about your accomplishments and your shortcomings.

Remember to be honest with yourself. If you had a bad day—reflect on the reason and resolve to make tomorrow a better day.

Make a list each day of all the things that are good in your life. Reflect on what you need to do to keep those good things in your life and resolve to keep moving forward toward your future goals.



You are assigned a new client who suffers from dementia. He is grumpy and hostile. On your first meeting he throws a plastic spoon at you and orders you out of the room.

- You know there must be some way to get through to him and gain his trust. And, you know you must provide care for him because no one else is available.
- **Think of three creative solutions** you might try to gain this client's trust. (*Hints: Use humor, soft music, find a common interest*).
- Share your ideas with your co-workers and supervisor and find out what they would do.

"Trust is like a vase. Once it's broken, you can fix the vase—but it will never be the same again."

~Author Unknown

WHEN TRUST IS BROKEN

When trust is broken, it can be very difficult to get it back. Trust is usually broken if *boundaries are unclear or violated*, or when *communication is inappropriate*.

You may lose the trust of your client if you:

- Become unreliable.
- Gossip or complain.
- Violate your client's rights.
- Offer too much personal information.

How will you know your client has lost trust or confidence in you?

- Some clients may become angry or irritated and may yell or complain about something that seems minor.
- Others may withdraw or stop asking for your help.
- Your client may even request that you be taken off their case.

In most circumstances, the client will not come right out and express this loss of trust or confidence. **But, if you sense trust has been broken and you have an opportunity to repair it, ask yourself these questions:**

- **Have I been reliable?** If you know you have not been reliable, admit this to your client, apologize and commit to becoming more reliable. *You must be willing to do what you say you will do.* Avoid making promises you can't keep.
- **Have I expressed negative feelings to my client?** When you have a bad day or are engaged in conflict in your personal life or with someone at work, it may be tempting to talk to your client about what's going on. But, this is inappropriate. Speaking poorly of another client, your co-workers, or your employer will make your client worry that you complain about *her* behind her back.
- **Have I violated my client's rights?** All clients have a right to considerate and respectful care, without discrimination, from honest and ethical healthcare professionals—and to be free of abuse and neglect.
- **Have I revealed inappropriate personal information?** Telling your client you have two children and offering funny stories about them is okay. Telling your client you are a single mom, your kids have different fathers and neither father pays child support is inappropriate. Your client shouldn't worry about you!

WHAT IF YOU CAN'T REBUILD THE TRUST ON YOUR OWN?

- Seek help from your supervisor if the broken trust is interfering with the therapeutic relationship. Remember, the goal of the therapeutic relationship is to focus on the *client's* needs. If lack of trust is hindering your client's progress, you have an obligation to make it better or step down from the case.



5 KEY POINTS

Key Points to Remember

1. Although your bond with your client may deepen and grow over time, your goal is to maintain a "therapeutic relationship."
2. A therapeutic relationship is one in which the client's physical and emotional needs are met. The client develops new coping skills. And, a new level of independence may be achieved by the client.
3. Gaining the trust and confidence of the client in a therapeutic relationship requires you to convey **genuineness, empathy,** and **respect.**
4. Setting clear and appropriate boundaries at the beginning of the relationship helps build trust because it allows both you and the client to know exactly what to expect.
5. Include family members in your quest to gain trust. Family members need to trust you to feel good about leaving a loved one in your care. Ask family members about your client's likes and dislikes! Involve those family members who are willing to help!

FINAL TIPS FOR BUILDING TRUST!

- Always start every therapeutic relationship by describing exactly what you *can* and *will* do to help your client reach the goals outlined in the plan of care.
- Let your client know exactly what he or she can expect from you—then be reliable and do what you say you will do.
- To maintain a therapeutic relationship—the client must be the focus of the care. The goal is to meet the physical and emotional needs of the client.
- Remember—the main difference between a social relationship and a therapeutic relationship is that in a therapeutic relationship *your needs* are secondary to the client’s needs.
- Never use clients to meet your own needs for socialization. In other words—do not confide in, reveal unnecessary personal information or vent feelings of frustration to your clients.
- An intimate relationship with a client or a client’s family member is NEVER appropriate—even after the therapeutic relationship is terminated.
- Concentrate on communication. Remember, *it’s not just what you say . . . it’s how you say it*. Body language like facial expressions, sighing, eye rolling, or finger tapping all communicate a negative emotion and should be avoided.
- Although honesty and genuineness are crucial for building trust in a relationship, you do not need to tell your client everything that comes to mind. Honesty should be used only when it enhances the therapeutic relationship.
- Don’t neglect family members. Family members must develop trust and confidence in you in order to feel comfortable giving a loved one over to your care. Involve willing family members and seek out their input and advice.
- And, above all else—learn how to trust yourself. Develop your own positive self regard. When you know yourself, like yourself, and trust yourself—you give others the confidence to place their trust in you!



WHAT I KNOW NOW!

Now that you’ve read this inservice on building trust, take a moment to jot down a couple of things you learned that you didn’t know before.





Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time

A Client Care Module:
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EMPLOYEE NAME
(Please print):

DATE: _____

- ***I understand the information presented in this inservice.***
- ***I have completed this inservice and answered at least eight of the test questions correctly.***

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE:

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:

Inservice Credit:

<input type="checkbox"/> Self Study	1 hour
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Study	1 hour

File completed test in employee's personnel file.

Are you "In the Know" about building trust and confidence with your clients? Circle the best choice or fill in your answer. Then check your answers with your supervisor!

1. True or False

A therapeutic relationship meets each person's need for socialization.

2. True or False

Empathy is useful in therapeutic relationships while sympathy is useful in social relationships.

3. True or False

One way to gain the trust of your client is to be completely genuine and say everything that comes to your mind.

4. True or False

Giving reassurance is a barrier to gaining trust.

5. All of the following conversations can harm trust, EXCEPT:

- A. Venting about a new work policy that makes your job harder.
- B. Asking a client for financial advice.
- C. Sharing funny stories with your client about your childhood.
- D. Discussing your upcoming divorce.

6. True or False

Offering support to family members of your client is a boundary violation.

7. Using touch is proven to have all these benefits, EXCEPT:

- A. Decreases stress.
- B. Heals serious diseases.
- C. Reduces pain.
- D. Improves circulation.

8. True or False

Trust can be broken if boundaries are unclear or violated or when communication is inappropriate.

9. True or False

Gaining trust is important because you are often required to intrude on your client's intimate space.

10. Fill in the Blanks

Gaining the trust in a therapeutic relationship requires you to convey genuineness, _____ and _____.