



A PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT MODULE:
THE ROLE OF THE CAREGIVER



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A Professional Development Module:
THE ROLE OF THE CAREGIVER

We hope you enjoy this inservice prepared by registered nurses especially for caregivers like you!

About this Course:

This course provides an overview of the role and responsibilities of direct care workers. Caregivers will review the different settings where they might work and the communication and teamwork skills necessary to succeed on the job. They will learn how to follow a care plan, maintain confidentiality, and avoid burnout in what can be a high stress career.

Audience: Home Health Aide; Hospice Aide; Nurse Assistant - CNA; Personal Care Aide

Teaching Method: Classroom-based, instructor-led training.

For California, please indicate the teaching method used: Lecture

Group Discussion Other (please specify) _____

CE Credit: 1 hour

Evaluation: The learner must achieve 80% or higher on the post-test to receive credit.

Disclosures: The authors, planners and reviewers of this educational activity declare no conflicts of interest with this activity. There are no commercial interests or sponsorships related to this educational activity.

Note to Instructors: Please see the Instructor's Guide for classroom activity suggestions, teambuilding activities, discussion questions, worksheets, quiz answer key, and a post-course survey for learners.

If you have comments and/or suggestions for improving this inservice, email In the Know at feedback@knowingmore.com.

THANK YOU!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Describe the role and responsibilities of at least three different types of caregiver.



Identify different types of clients you may encounter and the duties you will perform as a caregiver.



Apply professional standards when communicating with clients, their families, and the rest of the healthcare team.



Practice healthy guidelines for avoiding burnout and taking care of yourself.



COURSE OUTLINE

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A Professional Development Module: The Role of the Caregiver

WHAT EXACTLY IS A CAREGIVER?

Seriously, what is a caregiver? That's a good question that doesn't have an easy answer! The answer hinges on your state, the type of agency or facility you work for, and how that agency or facility is licensed.

Depending on your client's needs, you may provide personal care, companionship, or even homemaking duties. Here's the difference:

- **Companion Care/Sitter.** Companionship is vital to the health and well-being of all humans. For seniors who become isolated due to illness, injury, or distance from family, companionship is critical for emotional and physical health.
- **Homemaker.** Homemaking includes housekeeping duties like washing dishes and doing laundry. It also may include meal planning, shopping, and cooking for your client.
- **Personal Care.** Personal care is a more "hands-on" service. People who require help with personal care may need you to assist with bathing, grooming, dressing, and using the bathroom. You may also help with feeding, walking, and simple skincare.

Some states require caregivers to receive training and have a title such as PCA, HHA, or CNA before working with clients. And there may be additional requirements based on the setting where you work. For instance, the caregiver requirements are often different for home care than they are for assisted living.

In this lesson, you'll get some general information about your role as a caregiver, but be sure to talk with your employer to clarify exactly what it means to be a caregiver where you work.



WHERE DO CAREGIVERS WORK?

Caregivers work in a variety of settings. Here are a few examples:

Home Care Agencies

- Caregivers who work for a home care agency typically provide non-medical care services, such as housekeeping, transportation, and companionship.

Home Health Care Agencies

- Clients who need home health care generally have more advanced medical needs. Caregivers in home health typically need advanced training to become Home Health Aides (HHAs) or Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs).

Hospice Agencies or Facilities

- Caregivers who assist hospice clients usually have advanced training in caring for individuals throughout the dying process.

Assisted Living Facilities

- Personal Care Aides or Resident Care Aides care for residents in assisted living facilities. In most states, caregivers can also receive additional training to become Medication Aides in assisted living facilities.

Group Homes

- A caregiver can work in a group home as a Direct Support Professional or House Parent. These tend to be live-in positions.

Hospitals

- Caregivers may provide patient care, transportation, supervision, maintain safety and infection control, and perform clerical duties in hospitals.

And More!

- Caregivers can also work in rehabilitation facilities, skilled nursing facilities, independent living facilities, adult day centers, and doctor's offices.



Caregiver Titles

WHAT DO WE CALL YOU?

You might be a . . .

Caregiver

Aide

Personal Care Aide (PCA)

Personal Care Attendant

Companion/Sitter

Resident Care Aide

Resident Assistant

Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)

Home Health Aide (HHA)

Hospice Aide

Direct Care Professional

Direct Support Professional

Medication Aide



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!

WHO ARE THE CLIENTS/RESIDENTS/PATIENTS YOU'LL MEET?



Martin

Martin, an 87-year-old man who lives alone, recently had a heart attack and ended up in the hospital.

During his recovery, his grown children began asking questions like, "Can Dad do his own grocery shopping?" and "How can we make sure he's eating properly when we all live so far away?"

Martin's daughter needed someone to come to the apartment and help with housekeeping and meal preparation.



Carmela

Carmela was an active and fit 82-year-old woman who fell and broke her hip about 8 months ago. Since the accident, her health has seriously declined. She developed an infection that kept her in the hospital longer than expected.

She was transferred to an assisted living facility for rehabilitation. Her fear of falling again has kept her from getting back on her feet. She wants to go home, but she still needs extensive help with getting up and walking safely.



Carolyn

Carolyn is a 71-year-old widower with worsening signs of dementia. Her grown sons live close by and visit often, but they have careers and families that keep them busy.

One day, a neighbor called Carolyn's son to report she saw Carolyn walking around the yard wearing only a thin nightgown. When asked if she was alright, Carolyn seemed confused and said, "I wanted to go for a walk but I couldn't find the gate to get out of the yard."

Carolyn's family needed to find a solution to keep her safe while they were at work.

Caregiver Challenge

WHAT ARE THE BEST OPTIONS?

What care settings do you think are most appropriate for Martin, Carolyn, and Carmela?

- Martin would probably benefit from services offered by a home care agency. His needs are non-medical and uncomplicated.
- Carmela could either stay in the assisted living facility or get discharged to home with the services of a home health agency to help with physical therapy.
- Carolyn's situation is a little more challenging. She needs companion care for now, but as her dementia worsens, she'll need more assistance.

WHAT DO CAREGIVERS DO?

Whether you are assigned to deliver companion care to someone like Carolyn, to provide homemaking duties for a client like Martin, or to assist someone like Carmela with safe transfers and ambulation, your job is to assist clients with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, (IADLs).

What are ADLs?

The ADLs, or Activities of Daily Living, are all those basic self-care activities that people without an illness or injury normally do for themselves. **ADLs include the following:**

Eating
 Personal Hygiene
 Using the Bathroom
 Dressing & Grooming
 Walking and Moving About

What are IADLs?

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living are activities that go beyond basic needs. IADLs allow the person to be independent at home and in the community. **IADLs include the following:**

Housekeeping
 Meal Preparation
 Taking Medications as Prescribed
 Shopping
 Using the Telephone
 Transportation within the Community

Specific Examples of Common Caregiver Duties

Housekeeping Duties

- Vacuum, mop, dust, and tidy up all living areas
- Wash dishes
- Laundry
- Wash and change bed linens
- Plan and prepare meals
- Shop for groceries

Companionship

- Engage in conversation
- Play games
- Go on outings
- Escort to church and family events
- Assist with phone calls

Personal Care

- Assist with bathing/showering/bird baths
- Help with getting dressed
- Hair care, shaving, oral hygiene
- Assist with canes, walkers, wheelchairs
- Assist to bathroom
- Change incontinence briefs, undergarments, pads

Transportation & Safety

- Drive to doctor appointments or other errands
- Supervise client to avoid falls or other accidents

Caring for Clients with Diabetes

- Prepare foods appropriate for diabetic diet
- Encourage client to avoid restricted foods

Caring for Clients with Alzheimer's & Dementia

- Supervise to prevent wandering or accidents
- Provide activities and social interaction to minimize confusion

Medication Management

- Remind client to take medications as prescribed
- Monitor supply and remind client/family to request refills

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Being a caregiver is about more than just the tasks you'll perform. As a caregiver, you also must be able to communicate professionally with clients, their families, and your healthcare team.

Here are a few tips for communicating professionally with clients:

- **Set the tone.** 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.
- **Speak clearly and concisely.** Avoid slang words and medical terms that may be unfamiliar to older clients.
- **Be confident and friendly.** Make eye contact when speaking to a client (but avoid staring, which can make people uncomfortable).
- **Your body language matters!** Avoid crossing your arms and remember to smile. This lets others know you are approachable and friendly.
- **Be a good listener.** Never interrupt or cut the person off. If your client has a complaint, take time to find out what the problem is.
- **Be patient.** Give older clients extra time to answer your questions or tell you what they want 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.
- **Get involved.** Your client may feel comfortable sharing stories or experiences from life. Show interest when your client talks about his or her family or past adventures.
- **Focus on the person — not the task.** Slow down and talk calmly and casually while you provide care.



Caregiver's Role

**IT'S NOT
ALWAYS EASY!**

You are assigned to care for Martin. On your first day, he tells you he doesn't know why you're there because he doesn't need you. He says his daughters should just mind their own business. What should you do?

- Leave and document that the client refused services.
- Tell him he's rude and that you don't deserve that type of treatment.
- Take time to find out what's bothering him. Show understanding and try to build trust.

The best answer is C. Taking time to get to the root of the problem will give you a chance to show empathy and understanding. People who feel understood are far more likely to cooperate and accept the help you are there to give.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

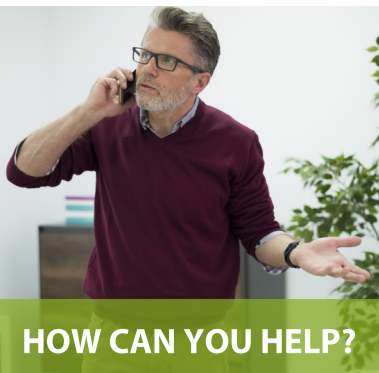
Caring for clients often means interacting with the family members who love them! It's important to understand that family members may be under a great deal of stress in response to their loved one's situation. Not only are they worried about their loved one, but they may also be concerned about money and other family obligations.

Here are some tips for communicating with family members:

- **Make time to talk to the client's family.** Family members may have useful information about your client's likes and dislikes, routines, and preferences.
- **Give brief but positive reports.** If a family asks, 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, we ate breakfast, then got cleaned up, and took a walk."
- **Answer family members' 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 dad like this." 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 grooming, tidying up, or writing upcoming appointments on a calendar.



Caregiver Challenge



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

How would you respond to the family member?

You've been assigned to care for Carmela, who is still in the assisted living facility. On your first day, she tells you how badly she wants to go home. When you ask her what it will take to get there, she says, "Well, it will probably never happen because my family has all moved away and there is no one at home who can help me."

Later that day, Carmela's son calls the facility for an update on his mother's condition. You take the call and express how badly Carmela would like to go home.

Carmela's son explodes and says, "You need to mind your own business. We all know she wants to go home, but it's just not possible right now! None of us has the time to babysit her. And we can't afford to pay someone to be there with her all day and night."

What's the best way to respond to this situation? Discuss as a group.

Caregiver's Role

WHO ARE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS?

Members of the care team include:

1. Clients
2. Clients' Family Members
3. Doctors
4. Nurses (RNs, LPNs)
5. Therapists
6. Social Workers
7. Caregivers
8. Chaplains

Notice how the client and the client's family members are at the top of this list? That's because they are the most important part of the care team!

Client-centered care is treatment that is organized around the client. It is a model in which care providers (doctors, nurses, therapists, and caregivers) partner with clients, families, and each other to identify and meet the client's needs.

WORKING WITH A CARE TEAM

Being a member of a healthcare team is a unique situation that is not found in any other business industry. Healthcare teams require everyone to carry an equal share of the workload with the common goal of caring for the client. Here are a few ways you can help clients meet their goals as part of a team:

- **Plan and prepare.** Think about how the other team members fit into your client's day. For example, it's now 9 a.m. You know that Mr. Simmons has a physical therapy session scheduled at 9:30. If you rush Mr. Simmons through his bath so that he's ready by 9:30, he'll be so tired that he won't be able to participate in his therapy session. Instead, you choose to let Mr. Simmons rest and plan to help him with his bath after the therapy session.
- **Know your scope of practice.** Don't ever perform a task that you know is beyond your training—no matter who asks you to do it! For example, let's say your supervisor is a registered nurse and she asks you to change the sterile dressing on Mr. Tucker's chest wound—just this once. You know it's against regulations but you want to make your supervisor happy. Don't do it! You could lose your job, as well as your ability to work as a caregiver.
- **Ask for more training.** In your daily work, you may be asked to perform tasks for which you have not received training. Ask your supervisor to provide training. For example, Mary has been assigned to a client who is transferred with a Hoyer lift. Mary has only used a Hoyer lift once and is afraid she might hurt the client.
- **Know what you're working toward.** Be sure you understand the healthcare goals for each of your clients. For example, the goal for Mr. Brown may be to help him get back to his usual activity level after hip surgery. The goal for Mrs. Newman may be to keep her from losing any more strength in her muscles. And the goal for Mr. Sanders may be to help him die with as much comfort and dignity as possible. Each of your clients will have different needs and different goals. This affects how you go about your work with each client.
- **Speak up.** When talking with team members, offer solutions, not just problems. Your team will benefit from your creative ideas and your ability to solve problems. Don't be shy about offering your opinion about how to make things better for your clients. You may be able to suggest solutions no one else would have thought of because you work so closely with the client.



READING THE CARE PLAN

What Is a Care Plan?

A care plan is a communication tool used to inform the healthcare team what the client needs and how care should be delivered. Most care plans include information about the following:

- The services a client needs and how often they are needed.
- The nutritional needs of the client.
- Ways to ensure the client's safety.



A Good Care Plan:

- Is individualized for each client.
- Looks at the client as a human being, not just as a disease or condition.
- Is used daily to direct client care.
- Gets updated whenever there is a significant change in the client's health status.

A Few Buzzwords

The care plan tells you what needs to be done, how frequently to do it, and how much assistance to give. To understand how much assistance the client needs with each task, look for words such as these:

Independent or Self Care. This means the person can do the task without help.

Standby Assist. This client needs a caregiver nearby as he or she attempts to perform the task independently.

Partial Assist. This means the caregiver and the client work together to perform the task.

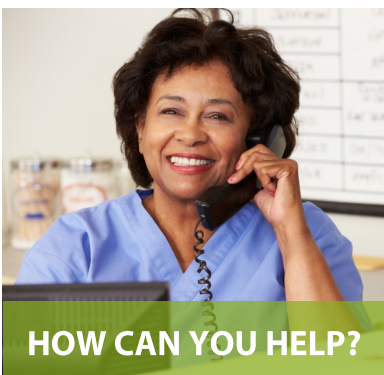
Total Support or Total Assist. A client who needs total support will have a caregiver that does all the work to complete the task.

Study Your Workplace Care Plan

Care plans look a little different in each care location. Take a look at the care plans your workplace uses. Familiarize yourself with how the information is organized.

- Make sure you understand what the client needs, how frequently to meet those needs, and how much assistance to give.

Caregiver's Role



What if you notice something on the care plan that doesn't seem to match up with your client? For example, the care plan states Carmela is incontinent of urine. However, you have cared for her for two weeks and she always requests help getting to the bedside commode and has not had a single episode of incontinence.

Here's what you'll do:

- First, be sure to document that the client requests your help and can transfer with assistance to the bedside commode.
- Then, report your findings to your nurse or supervisor. **You** spend the most time with the client and will be the first to notice changes in your client's status.

Remember! The care plan is important for legal and financial reasons. It should always be as accurate as possible. If you notice something that seems wrong—speak up. It will benefit everyone!

MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

As a healthcare worker, you are trusted each day with confidential information about your clients.

As a caregiver, you spend more time with your clients than anyone else on the healthcare team. This helps you develop a close relationship with your clients. Your clients feel safe telling you personal details about their lives and their health because they know you will keep it to yourself.

Now, be honest. Have you ever discussed a client's private information with your family or laughed about a client with a group of co-workers? Most healthcare workers would probably answer, "yes."

Unfortunately, it is easy to break confidentiality if you're not careful. So what exactly *is* confidentiality? **Confidentiality can be described as the following:**

- Your clients and your co-workers expect you to keep their personal information to yourself—and you expect the same from them.
- You guard information about your clients **all the time**, even in the privacy of your own home.
- When you keep personal information safe, your clients come to trust you. This trust is an important part of your relationship with your clients.
- Healthcare organizations must *promise* clients that their medical information will be kept safe. This promise is included in the **Patient's Bill of Rights** in all healthcare settings. Be sure you understand the Patient's Bill of Rights where you work.

HIPAA: IT'S THE LAW!

HIPAA (which stands for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) is the law which outlines the privacy rules that protect clients' medical records and information.

Which of the following do you think are examples of confidential documentation?

- A client's medical record.
- Your client care notes.
- A bulletin board listing each client and his or her diagnosis.
- A client's address and telephone number.
- A copy of a doctor's order.

What's the right answer? **They all are!**

Remember, be careful when talking about your clients. Before speaking, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is what I have to say confidential information?
- Is the person I am speaking to part of the client's healthcare team?
- Am I in a private place or are there other people around me who shouldn't hear what I am saying?
- Am I sharing this information for the client's benefit? Or is it just "gossip"?

Caregiver's Role

WHO IS ON THE CARE TEAM?

Maintaining your clients' confidentiality involves keeping their medical records away from anyone who does not have the right to see them and never discussing their diagnosis with someone who is not a part of their healthcare team.

Private healthcare information should be available only on a **need-to-know basis**. This means that each person on the care team should only have access to information that he or she needs to know to carry out the care plan.

Who is considered part of the "care team"? The people on the client's care team may consist of the following people:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Caregivers
- Therapists
- The client's main caretaker, such as a parent, sibling, spouse, or partner.

BEING YOUR OWN BEST CAREGIVER

Being a caregiver can be extremely rewarding work. You are invited into the daily lives of your clients and their families. You are present for many of their ups and downs. Often, a strong family-like bond is formed.

But, being a caregiver can take a toll on your mental and physical health. When you spend so much time giving care and supporting others, you may tend to neglect yourself. This can easily lead to **BURN OUT!**

Remember the old saying,

“You can’t give away what you don’t have.”

That means you have to take care of yourself, too!

Here are some things you can do:

- **EAT WELL:** You’ll get busy and hit the fast food restaurant for an easy, no-brainer dinner. That’s okay every now and then. But, take the time to fix meals at home most days.

Food you prepare yourself at home is lower in sodium, processed carbs, and calories. Use the time it takes to cook the meal to reflect on your day and “let it all go.”
- **EXERCISE:** It takes a lot of strength and energy to be a caregiver. Exercise can help you build your strength and recharge your energy.

Exercise also helps boost your mood. Getting your heart rate up triggers the release of endorphins in your brain. These are the “feel good” chemicals that give you a sense of peace and well-being!
- **RELAX:** Stress takes a toll on your body and mind. It’s important to take time to relax. Whether you like to take a walk in the park, read a book, or “zone out” in front of the TV, take a little time every day to relax!
- **RE-ENERGIZE:** When you begin to feel like you are running out of steam, find a way to re-energize! Take a day or two off if possible, take a short vacation, plan a night out with friends, see a movie, or take a bubble bath.
- **ASK FOR HELP:** There may come a time when things are too mentally or physically stressful. If this happens, ask for help! Tell your supervisor how you are feeling. You may just need a break. Or, you may need a change of assignment.



