
Course Description

This course addresses ways to improve medication adherence and steps to assist senior patients in taking their medications as prescribed, leading to improved health outcomes.

Purpose

To increase the impact office staff has on medication adherence by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess patients' ability to take their medications as prescribed. In doing so, office staff can intervene appropriately and have a positive influence on the coordination of care, improved health outcomes and a better patient experience.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate solutions to increase the ability for seniors to achieve adherence.
- Describe the lifestyle profiles of seniors.
- Identify the challenges of medication adherence.
- State the reasons for patient non-adherence.
- Utilize assessment skills to identify and manage medication non-adherence.

Target Audience

- Licensed vocational nurses
- Medical assistants
- Office managers
- Registered nurses
- Social workers
- Other administrative personnel

Training Time and Set Up

- Set up: 15 to 30 minutes
- Training: 60 minutes

Required Materials

- Evaluation form
- Ice breaker tool kit
- Interactional activities
- Handouts/tip sheets
- Sign-in sheet
- Slide deck
- Class notes

Expected Outcome

At the end of this training session, staff members will be able to:

- Incorporate assessment skills into their daily practice.
- Incorporate skills needed to identify patients' challenges regarding medication adherence.
- Identify reasons for non-adherence.
- Provide solutions to seniors for achieving adherence.

Discussion Prompts

Give examples in which medication instructions can be interpreted in multiple ways. Ask participants to share personal or patient experiences with medication instructions.

Discuss barriers in taking medications (e.g., forgetful, inconsistent, unpleasant taste, difficulty swallowing pills, doesn't believe it really works, cost, etc.).

Interactive Techniques

Opening pill bottle. Give staff pill bottles that have been glued shut as an example of the difficulty of opening containers with arthritis or lack of strength.

Medication sorting. Give staff a list of medications they need to take. Provide a description of the medications (e.g., blue and round) and provide them multiple candy options they have to sort through (e.g., Skittles, M&M's, Smarties). Make the descriptions vague and generic to demonstrate the difficulty of interpreting prescriptions and prescription instructions.

Medication scavenger hunt. Provide staff with a list of medications and a picture of each "pill" they must find in order to prevent going to the hospital. Depending on meeting time, the list should include at least 10 to 12 medications that must be found. Buttons and beads will represent the "pills." Pills should be placed in various stations around the room to represent different places patients can get their pills (e.g., CVS, Costco, the doctor, VA, hospital, etc.). Participants that are unable to find their pills must go to the hospital. Participants should have no more than five to 10 minutes to find their pills. Winner(s) will receive a prize.

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