

Partners in Quality Care - January 2015 -

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A team is a group of people who work together to accomplish a common goal. Each team member has a specific responsibility.

The home care team is made up of many members, and they must work together very well to meet the client's special goals.

The home care team may consist of a case manager, a registered nurse (RN), the physician, a nurse specialist, licensed practical nurses (LPN), in-home aide, physical therapist (PT), occupational therapist (OT), respiratory therapist (RT), social worker, speech therapist, dietician, and others such as clergy and volunteers.

The In-home aide care team member usually spends more time with the client than any other member of the care team, he or she is the "eyes and ears" of the care team.

One of the In-home aide's most important responsibilities is to carefully observe any changes in the client's condition or environment, write down their observations in clear and objective language ("record"), and pass that information on to the appropriate person ("report"). Recording and reporting may be different in different work settings, but the principles and the skills of observation are the same.

Please be sure to discuss with your supervisor your agency policies and procedures for how you are to record and report observations specific to your clients.

The In-home aide as a member of the care team:

Because nurse aides provide the majority of hands-on care, they are often the first to learn about people's concerns, fears, and problems. Unfortunately, this important information is often hard to communicate to supervisors and other members of the health care team. Sometimes nurse aides can be uneasy about communicating what they know about the people they care for.

As a nurse aide, you may have information that is critical to your clients' well-being and unknown to other team members. Knowing how to start a conversation with a supervisor or other health care provider can improve the likelihood that unrecognized but important information is shared. To do a good job, think about what might make it easier to share information, ask tough questions, or receive direction about next steps from team members.

Ideas of conversation starters:

When you need more detail or direction...
"PLEASE TELL ME MORE"

When you want to know who to talk to about an issue...
"WHO IS THE BEST PERSON TO COMMUNICATE THIS INFORMATION TO THE FAMILY?"

When you need help writing up your ideas....
"HOW SHOULD I DOCUMENT THIS INFORMATION SO IT WILL BE CLEAR TO OTHERS?"

Effective communication on the team:

In Home Care, communication is the link between you, the client, and the agency. You have to be certain that your message has been received and understood exactly as you meant it to be received. That is why feedback (to clarify that the information given was heard and understood as intended) is an important part of the process. We must be able to say what we mean clearly and without confusion. By sharing accurate information and observations with the home care team, the aide helps the client receive better care.

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Expectations as a member of the care team:

- Look and act professionally-Your appearance says a lot about the way you will perform your duties. A neat, clean, and properly dressed person conveys an image of one who is ready to perform tasks properly. Remember, first impressions are usually lasting ones. Clients and families will appreciate your professional look. Be sure to know your agency policies and procedures about proper dress and appearance. Healthy habits and a positive attitude are keys to acting in a professional manner.
- Perform your duties properly- Your training program will prepare you to provide safe, competent care to your clients. As a home care aide, you will perform activities under the direction of a nurse supervisor. **Do not perform any procedures that you have not been taught.** Do not perform any duties that your supervisor has not listed in the plan of care (notify your supervisor if you are being asked to perform tasks not on the plan of care, the plan of care may need to be adjusted).
- Work as part of the team- The team is only as good as each of its members. Most of the time you will be working alone in the client's home; therefore, you are the team's representative. How you work with the client and family will tell them how well the team functions. Your attitude and behavior are very important in giving a positive impression of the home care team.
- **REMEMBER YOU PLAY A VITAL ROLE ON THE TEAM!**



Forming the Home Care Team:

The types of team members who are selected will vary according to the needs of each client and family.

The first step is that the client is assessed by the appropriate person to do the assessment such as a registered nurse.

The next step is to plan for the care of the client with the client and family involved in the plan and a plan of care is developed.

The type and amount of services are determined according to information such as the client's health and physical condition and abilities, treatments ordered by the doctor, family members or others able and willing to give care, home environment and home management needs, other needs such as nutritional needs, special equipment, transportation, financial resources of the client to obtain services needed, length of service needed and expected results. The plan of care includes activities to perform, who will perform them and how often.

The In-home aide assignment sheet is based on the plan of care and the tasks as well as other duties such as what to observe, record and report will be assigned to the In-home aide.

The case manager who may be the registered nurse or other professional develops the goals to be met by the team according to the needs of the client and family. For the client who is disabled, the goal may be to help restore as much function as possible.

The duties you perform as a home care aide are a vital part of your client's care. In some cases, you will be the person who has the most contact each week with the client and family. Information you share with other members of the team is very important. The team relies on your valuable contributions so that the proper care and treatment can be given.

As an In-home aide spending a lot of time with the client, you may notice changes that need to be reported that someone else may not notice.

Be sure to discuss with your supervisor who you should share information with about your client. There are laws about how and with whom a client's information can be shared.