**MODULE VI**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMWORK in HEALTHCARE**

**Introduction**

Interdisciplinary teamwork is important to achieving both positive health results for people who receive home care and supportive work environments for nurse aides. This module defines interdisciplinary teams, identifies common challenges to teamwork in healthcare, and provides tips for good communication among team members.

**Objectives:**

At the end of the module, the students will be able to:

1. Define what an interdisciplinary healthcare team is – Who, What, Where, When, How
2. Reflect on past experiences of teamwork
3. Talk about the important ingredients of good teamwork
4. Talk about the nurse aide’s role on a healthcare team
5. Identify the benefits and challenges of teamwork in healthcare
6. Demonstrate how to communicate well with team members

**What is an interdisciplinary team?**

An interdisciplinary team is a group of people with different skills, knowledge and information working toward a common goal

**WHO:** A group of people, or even just two people such as the nurse and nurse aide

**WHAT:** With different skills and knowledge

**WHERE:** Gathered around a virtual or real table

**WHEN:** On a regular basis

**HOW:** With common goals

In healthcare, teams are most important when situations are complex:

* When diseases and treatments are complex,
* When people are complex,
* When social situations are complex.

For example: The following situations could benefit from a team approach:

1. Care of people who are old or young
2. Care of people who have life limiting illness
3. Care of people who have multiple illnesses and conditions
4. Care of people who are transitioning between settings, such as from hospital to home or home to nursing home.
5. Care of people whose health is complicated by the experience of grief, loss, family conflict or too little money.

Situations when a team approach might not be needed:

1. An otherwise healthy child with a sinus infection
2. A high school athlete who breaks his arm
3. A couple that needs a doctor’s examination to get a marriage license

**ACTIVITY #1: WHAT IS TEAMWORK**

Think about a baseball team:

What makes the players a team?

What are important qualities of the coach?

What is important about the team members who sit on the bench?

What might need to change when the pitcher is sick?

What happens with the first baseman only makes half of the practices?

What happens when the outfielder drops a pop fly and the other team wins the game?

**ACTIVITY #2:** **YOUR EXPERIENCE ON A TEAM**

Pair up and talk about your experience being part of a team (family, sports team, or work team)

What was the purpose of your team?

What qualities were important for your teammates to have?

What qualities or contributions did **you** add to your team?

Discuss your answers and agree on the 3 most important ingredients for good teamwork.

**Case Study #1:**

Mr. Smith has Parkinson’s disease.

Mr. Smith’s healthcare team includes a doctor, social worker, PT and a nurse aide who helps him with his morning routines.  Mr. Smith mentioned to his doctor that he missed going to church with his wife.  His doctor thought his shuffling, slow gait was the problem, so the doctor increased Mr. Smith’s Parkinson’s medications and referred him to physical therapy.

The physical therapist evaluated Mr. Smith in the clinic and thought that he had all the needed physical abilities to go to church.  For example, he could walk well enough, had good endurance, could come to stand from sitting, and had good balance.  The physical therapist also thought Mr. Smith might be getting depressed so she referred him to the social worker.

The social worker talked with Mr. Smith and noticed that he seemed reluctant to go to church even though in the past, church was a meaningful part of his life. His wife was very excited about the idea and couldn’t understand why her husband was reluctant. The social worker thought Mr. Smith might be depressed but she wanted to check this idea out with the nurse aide who had been working in the home for a year.

You, the nurse aide, had a chance to talk with the social worker about Mr. Smith. Based on assisting Mr. Smith daily with his morning routine, you had an idea that his leaky bladder might explain Mr. Smith’s reluctance to go to church.

Your have observed that Mr. Smith is very sensitive about his leaking bladder. You know this because he has asked you to wash out his underwear in the sink to prevent others from knowing he’s had an accident.

**Pair up with a classmate and discuss the following questions:**

As the aide on Mr. Smith’s healthcare team, who would you tell about Mr. Smith’s leaky bladder problem?

Who else on the team would be likely to know the “leaky bladder” information you have about Mr. Smith?

What new solutions could arise from the team knowing the “leaky bladder” information you know about?

In general, what kinds of things do you know about the people you care for that you think doctors might not know?

Think about other times when you were a team member in another person’s care. As a nurse aide, how would you describe your role on the healthcare team?

What do you see as your most important contribution to the people you care for? To the healthcare team?

**Case Study #2:**

Three home care nurse aides dreaded their shift with Mr. Jones because he would occasionally lash out at them for no apparent reason.  He even took a swing at one of the nurse aides as she brought his lunch to the table.  The lashing out was always a surprise because usually Mr. Jones was very pleasant and easy to be with.

The home care agency wants to insure the safety of their aides as well as try to serve Mr. Jones. Before prematurely discharging Mr. Jones from the service, the nurse met with the three aides to see if there was a common pattern for when the lashing out occurred. The aides knew Mr. J was formerly a boxing champion. After talking to the aides and then doing an eye examination, the nurse discovered that Mr. Jones had homonymous hemianopsia.

As one of Mr. Jones’ nurse aides, what information do you need to know from the nurse?

**Who** needed to know **what** before solutions could be figured out?

In everyday work, what factors prevent successful teamwork?

What solutions can you think of to decrease the barriers that prevent teamwork?

Next time, is there anything you would you do differently to cut down on your fear of working with people like Mr. Jones?

**MAGIC WORDS IN TEAMWORK**

**Activity #3:**

Because nurse aides provide the majority of hands-on care, they are often the first to learn about 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. **What are your ideas about why it can be hard to talk to supervisors or team members?**

As a nurse aide, you may have information that is critical to your patients’ 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.

**Pair up with a classmate and practice what you would say in the following situations: (WRITE DOWN THE WORDS THAT FEEL MOST HELPFUL TO YOU)**

When a supervisor seems distracted or pressed for time….\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When a supervisor is not paying attention….\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When the nurse seems overwhelmed….\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When you need more detail or direction….\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When you disagree...\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When you want to know who to talk to about an issue....\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When you need help writing up your ideas....\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_