

Module 4: Professionalism in the Workplace

Objectives

- Give examples of the “Golden Rule”.
- Discuss the phrase “ignorance of the law is no excuse”.
- Discuss role clarity.
- Discuss person centered care.
- Give examples of positive and negative personal work skills.
- Give examples of positive and negative work ethics.
- Discuss eight work skills.
- Explain why your personal physical and emotional health are important to your work.

Key Terms

- Job Description
- Scope of Training
- Ethics
- Burnout
- Stress

Content

<p>!!! REMINDER !!!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR FACILITY'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. • ALWAYS FOLLOW THE CONSUMER’S CARE PLAN. • NEVER WORK OUTSIDE YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION OR SCOPE OF TRAINING. • NEVER PERFORM MEDICAL/CLINICAL PROCEDURES OR INTERPRET MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR RESULTS. • REPORT OBSERVATIONS TO SUPERVISOR UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE. 	
<p>SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION</p>	
<p>Professional Work Values</p>	<p>Before we talk about more of the specifics of doing your job, we need to take time to talk about the values behind the work that we do. If your mother, your grandfather, or your child, were in a hospital, nursing facility, residential facility, or cared for in their home how would you want them to be treated? The standards for the care you give at work should be as high as the standards by which you treat yourself and by which you like to be treated. The easiest way to sum up the values associated with health care and human services is the Golden Rule.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> “Do to others, as you would like them to do to you.” </p> <p>In other words, you should always treat your Consumers the same way you would like to be treated if you were in the same situation.</p>

	<p>Regardless of where you work in the human service field, there are important specific values that underlie your work as a PSS. Consider that the people you serve may have had their lives affected by age, illness, or disability. You must pay special attention to how you treat them. Your attitude, behavior, and appearance are all a part of that.</p> <p>When you focus on the needs and interests of the people in the facility or home environment, you are being person-centered. If you want to know what a person wants to do, ask her. If you want to know what a person thinks of what you are doing, you should ask him. In order to really be person-centered at work, you need to listen to what people are telling you. Some people may not be able to use words to talk to you, but they can tell you what they think and feel by their actions.</p>
<p>Professional Work Responsibilities</p>	<p>PSSs often work in health care settings and with medical staff. <u>However, it is extremely important to always remember that PSSs are not clinical staff and cannot perform medical duties.</u> PSSs are administrative staff and work under a supervisor of administrative personnel. Your employer must provide you with a detailed job description, and your supervisor will tell you specifically which activities you can perform. Your employer may train you to perform additional duties that are not covered in this training but may be included in your job description. You should be fully informed about your responsibilities as a PSS from your employer. You must take time to become familiar with these responsibilities in order to accurately follow the regulations that apply to your job. Your employer participates in a heavily regulated industry. In this position, you will be entering into a legal relationship with the Consumer and your employer. Your responsibilities do not go away simply because you did not take the time to learn them. As the old saying goes:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>"Ignorance of the law is no excuse."</u></p> <p>Another good rule of thumb to remember is to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEVER</p>

	perform any activity that is not specifically part of your training and job description even if you think you understand how to do it, or are requested to do it by anyone, including your supervisor.
REFERENCE TEXTBOOK: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 3: PROFESSIONALISM AND JOB-SEEKING SKILLS	
TEXTBOOK SECTION	NOTES
What is a Professional?*	
What is a Work Ethic?*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Punctuality* 	<p>Always be punctual. When you are late for work, it shows a lack of responsibility and commitment to your job. It also may place an unfair burden on your coworkers who must cover your workload until you arrive and on the Consumer(s) who may not be able to function without your help.</p> <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan work activities to ensure services are provided at the appropriate times. • Gather supplies and materials needed to provide services in a productive and timely manner. • Maintain personal work area in a neat and orderly fashion.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Reliability* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Accountability* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Conscientiousness* 	<p>In reference to the sentence in the textbook “If you have not been shown how to do a procedure that you have been asked to do, show that you are interested in learning how.” A good rule of thumb is to remember your professional responsibilities and NEVER perform any activity that you have not been specifically trained to perform even if you think you understand how to do it, or are requested to do it by anyone, including your supervisor.</p> <p>ALWAYS STAY WITHIN YOUR SCOPE OF TRAINING.</p> <p>Performing tasks that are not in your job description and/or that you have not been trained for can cause harm to the Consumer and yourself. Legal issues may be involved. Always discuss with your supervisor if you are unsure if the task is within your Scope of Training or if you do not feel you have enough experience to perform the task.</p> <p>Make sure to use good judgement throughout your work day.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtesy and Respectfulness* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set and model high standards of personal conduct. • Be patient when interacting with Consumers. • Be committed to the welfare of Consumers. • Part of being courteous to your Consumer's is to not bring your own problems in to work and to refrain from gossiping. The Consumers have enough to worry about without the added burden of any of your problems or complaints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always do your job and act with Integrity. • Make sure you fulfill the promises that you make to your coworkers and your Consumers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperativeness* 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sensitive to Consumers' moods. • Be sensitive and take steps to interpret non-verbal cues as to what Consumers are thinking and feeling.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Desire to Learn* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and understand what resources are available and seeks guidance when needed.
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION	
<p>Prioritizing</p>	<p>Health care environments are busy places with many different demands made on staff all at once. Most people have many needs, preferences, and requests. Sometimes there is more to be done than time allows. You will find that you can get more done and feel less pushed if you practice time management each day. Time management involves planning your day and organizing your time according to the priorities. Many occasions where staff are rushed or overburdened could be prevented with more efficient organization of the workday and setting aside time to get things done. This will prevent situations where important things do not get done before things that are not important. When the staff does not make distinctions between things that are urgent, important, and merely routine, duties may not be carried out satisfactorily, or at all. The urgent and important tasks should always be done first.</p> <p>The term "prioritization" means listing jobs or tasks in the order of importance. It's vital that staff prioritize their duties, so that Consumers are served in a timely fashion according to their needs. Thus, highly urgent tasks or services are completed first, or as needed, with those that are less urgent are carried out second.</p>

	<p>Prioritizing does not mean doing only those tasks that are urgent or “emergencies” but simply doing them first, completing them, and then moving on to less demanding tasks. All assigned tasks need to be done in a typical workday. It is a matter of putting them in an appropriate order on a daily basis. Some of the questions that you should ask yourself when setting priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the task involve a safety issue? • Does it affect the Consumer? • How many Consumers are affected by this task? • Is it a staff need? • Is it a sanitation issue? <p>Home Care</p> <p>You may have to consult with the Consumer in order to prioritize your in-home visit. The Consumer’s priorities are very important when planning your time. Check to see if he/she has a list of activities for you to do upon your arrival.</p> <p>Organizing with the Consumer in Mind</p> <p>People need to know what is going to be happening in the next few hours, the next day, and the next week. Involvement in planning helps people to feel like they have a future to look forward to. It allows the person to have a sense of control over his/her own life. It is also a way to help staff focus on the work that is most important and to prioritize accordingly.</p>
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not be thrown off balance by a need to change plans at the last minute. • Be able to juggle attention to Consumers and tasks effectively. • Adjust to working with a variety of professionals. • Accept change in policies and procedures which affect your work environment.
REFERENCE TEXTBOOK: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 5: COMMUNICATION SKILLS	
TEXTBOOK SECTION	NOTES
Communication Among Members of The Health Care Team*	
Reporting*	Follow your facility’s guidelines for written and verbal reports.
REFERENCE TEXTBOOK: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 3: PROFESSIONALISM AND JOB-SEEKING SKILLS	

TEXTBOOK SECTION	NOTES
Personal Health and Hygiene*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Maintaining Your Physical Health* 	<p>You cannot be under the influence of marijuana or any other recreational drugs or alcohol in the workplace.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Maintaining Your Emotional Health* 	<p>Further discussion in Supplemental Information below.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Personal Hygiene and Appearance* 	<p>You must have good personal hygiene. You will work closely with Consumers. Bad breath or body odor (including strong deodorants, shampoos, cologne, or perfumes) will hurt your ability to perform your duties. An unclean body or clothes will also offend Consumers and may violate requirements for infection-free care. Your facility may have additional requirements for dress codes and personal appearance guidelines.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines Box 3-1: Guidelines for a Professional Appearance*
<p>What Did You Learn?*</p>	<p>Questions 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 only</p>
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION	
<p>Avoiding Excess Stress and Burnout</p>	<p>No job is free from stress. All work brings responsibilities, problems, demands, and pressures. In normal circumstances stress is an unavoidable part of working life. A reasonable amount of pressure must be expected in any job.</p> <p>However, our ability to deal with pressures is not limitless. When the pressure is excessive and unrelenting it can become harmful and cause burnout. Performance drops and your health declines. This is why it is important that you understand how this can happen and what you can do to prevent it. You cannot remove all pressure from work, but you should understand and control the harmful levels of stress that may affect your performance on the job.</p> <p>Take care of your own emotional and physical well-being first. This is not selfish! You cannot do you best for anyone else unless you are in good shape yourself. Here are some tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid excessive caffeine, nicotine, and other stimulants, as these tend to heighten stress. • Leave your work at work; don't take it home with you. Make a clear distinction between your work life and your personal life; neither should get in the way of the other.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not take on the problems of your Consumers. You must be a purposeful change agent, but you can't do it unless you maintain an appropriate professional distance. • Maintain and nurture your social supports on and off the job. Do not allow yourself to become isolated. On the job, talk with colleagues who share and understand what you are experiencing and feeling. Off the job, maintain contact with family and friends. Your life must be a balance of work and home/personal life. Maintain supportive relationships in all aspects of your life. • Make sure that you leave time in your life to "play," because this is a major way of recharging your batteries. This includes taking vacation time, using personal days when you need them, and using sick days when you are truly sick. You cannot do your best work if you are not rested, have not taken care of things important in your own life, and are not feeling well. Keeping both body and mind in good health is an important way of managing stress and avoiding burnout.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Stress? 	<p>Stress is usually described as a person's reaction to demands, pressures, and expectations. Not all pressure is negative. People often are motivated to perform at their best by the challenges and difficulties (i.e., stress) in their lives.</p> <p>Most people are accustomed to minor signs and symptoms that indicate when they are stressed or "up-tight". Generally, these symptoms last only briefly and have little or no long-term effect. Occasionally, however, the effects of excessive stress can be both physical and psychological:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical effects include increased heart rate, headache, stomach ache, blurred vision, perspiring, dizziness, aching neck and shoulder muscles, clenched jaw, and skin rashes. • Behavioral effects include increased anxiety and irritability, "flying off the handle" easily, excess consumption of alcohol and other drugs, fitful sleeping, and poor concentration. <p>As you can see, each one of these signs could also apply to a range of other health problems. That is why it is</p>

	<p>important to consult with a trained professional if severe stress is suspected.</p> <p>When relief from a stressful state is not available, or is of short duration before the next onslaught, the body has no time to repair and the stress becomes long lasting and more serious. Long-term problems emerge and recovery time, even with professional help, takes much longer.</p>
<p>• Emotional Cues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional exhaustion; • Low energy level, but sometimes an increase in physical activity level (agitation, driven, can't slow down); • Fatigue; • Irritability; • Difficulty thinking or concentrating on tasks at hand; • Loss of interest or pleasure in things usually enjoyed; • Depersonalization of the people in need of support; • Reduced sense of accomplishment (“what I do makes no difference”); • Feelings of worthlessness; or • Feelings of guilt.
<p>• Biological Cues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep disturbances (sleeping too little or sleeping too much); • Appetite disturbances (loss of appetite or overeating); • Weight changes (loss or gain); • Mood swings (e.g., getting sad at night when not occupied with other things); • Loss of interest in sexual activity; • Increased vulnerability to infections and colds; and • Deterioration in general health.