

Staff Development for Person-Centered Care

Boettcher, I.F., Kemeny, B., DeShon, R.P. & Stevens, A.B. (2004). A system to develop staff behaviors for person-centered care. *Alzheimer's Care Quarterly*, 5 (3), 188-196.

Working with residents with dementia is a big challenge for certified nurse aides (CNAs). This challenge is compounded when CNAs are not provided with appropriate education in this area. Creating an optimal environment for the person with dementia can be successful in person-centered care (PCC) with careful planning. Detailed knowledge of residents by the CNAs caring for these individuals as well as consistent staff assignment are vital to high quality care. In order to successfully teach PCC to CNAs they must be supervised using a PCC approach. Many nurses are not trained to provide supervision in a PCC style. Successful training should not only include knowledge about dementia but also incorporate actual changes in staff behavior. Only when staff behavior changes are sustained over a long period of time, will they have an enduring impact on the quality of care for residents.

A research team from Michigan and Alabama universities has produced a staff development program called *Relate* with these two elements in mind. The incorporation of PCC has been reflected in:

- experimental techniques in class that work with various styles of learning
- availability of on-the job training
- provision of tools and skills for nurses to help train CNAs
- assignment of homework for staff between training sessions

In addition to classes, each CNA received one-on-one coaching with a nurse to practice his/her skills with residents with dementia. Focus groups helped nurses to understand staff members' perception of the changes in behavior and provided an opportunity for feedback. Homework provided a chance for self-reflection on learned skills and their effectiveness for working with particular residents.

This multifaceted approach to training CNAs in PCC skills has brought a significant improvement in quality of care for residents with dementia. The program has met the needs of staff for cognitive, affective, and skill learning. In addition, CNAs have had the opportunity to practice new skills in the classroom and with actual residents. The effectiveness of this staff development program has been achieved by addressing the needs of CNAs. Staff satisfaction has increased due to greater competence in responding to residents with dementia needs.

Job satisfaction is directly related to staff retention and consistency in staffing has increased quality of residents' care. However, "changing the culture for CNAs certainly requires attention to training nurses in supervisory skills" for PCC (Boettcher, Kemeny, DeShon & Stevens, p.190).

Implications: CNAs in many nursing homes have a need for more education, stronger support, better relationships with residents' families and effective coping strategies. Some researchers suggest that relationships between nursing management and staff affect job satisfaction and retention. The PCC style of management strengthens staff empowerment, provides a greater opportunity for staff development, and allows easier access to resources and support. All of these elements contribute to staff retention and are instrumental for staff satisfaction.