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Resources for Nursing Home Professionals

Interactive Teaching Strategies for Staff Development

Adult learning must be engaging to be effective. Interactive teaching strategies such as games, simulations, fairs, role playing, team building, and focused videos foster enthusiasm, communication, team cohesion, and problem-solving skills. Research has demonstrated that interactive and entertaining learning strategies in nursing homes increase caring skills, self-confidence, empowerment, and creative thinking. This Fast Fact focuses on educational strategies that nursing home leaders can use to engage long-term care personnel.

Adult Education Needs to Be Fun

■ **Games improve team building, develop problem solving skills, and enhance creativity.** Games make learning more fun. Training of certified nurses assistants using interactive games styled as Jeopardy, Trivial Pursuit, Monopoly, and Bingo enhances team building, encourages enthusiasm, improves factual learning, teaches problem-solving skills, and increases training attendance. Examples of fun games used to train nursing home staff in clinical skills are:

- **Pressure Ulcer Jeopardy.** This game is used in workshops and presentations to train frontline health care workers, administrators, and senior leaders in pressure ulcer prevention. There are simple questions such as “The best treatment for pressure scores is...” and more difficult ones like “What is the body’s first line of defense against infections/microorganisms?”
- **Airplane Game Simulation.** This game is used to simulate quality improvement concepts such as small-scale changes, rapid cycle tests of change, and the PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) model.

Adult Education Uses Practical Learning, Simulation, and Problem-Solving Exercises

■ **Encourage staff to place themselves in their residents’ shoes.** In one practical training, CNAs found they felt embarrassed and uncomfortable wearing incontinency pads. After this demonstration, staff made a concerted effort to reduce pad usage in their residents. Giving baths or showers to a staff member can foster better caring skills by creating an elder-friendly bathing experience.

- **Simulation and problem solving exercises most effective for educating nurses.** Problem-based learning is organized around the resolution of real-world problems. Both simulations and problem solving exercises prepare nursing staff to deal with real-life situations. In one study, a patient safety simulation to reduce medication use and errors increased nurses’ satisfaction, problem solving, and critical thinking. One scenario, called “*What’s Wrong With This Patient,*” simulated safe medication use in four areas: medication, equipment, physical, and documentation safety.
- **Interactive educational fairs provide opportunities for hands-on learning and team building.** Every department sets up an educational table focusing on critical issues such as food safety, environmental safety, infection control, proper documentation, medication, flu, quality assurance, advance directives, or fall prevention. Instructors at each table use a variety of tools and teaching aids, such as photographs, drawings, role modeling, visual aids, slides, hand-outs, safety equipment, and demonstrations.

Adult Education Develops Communication, Team Building, and Clinical Skills

■ **Role play exercises develop communication, problem-solving, and self-confidence.** Education directors and managers use role play exercises to teach staff how to solve a clinical emergency, care for an agitated resident, assess residents’ needs, deal with angry family members, talk with a difficult team member, care for a person who is dying, or deal with residents’ falls. Besides improving communication skills, role play exercises develop conflict-resolution, problem-solving, team efficiency, and trust-building skills.

Interactive Teaching Strategies for Staff Development

- **Team building exercises increase productivity and satisfaction.** Team building exercises are structured experiences to teach team collaboration, communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. In addition, unit-tailored team-building nursing intervention strategies improve group cohesion, nurse interaction, team decision-making, equality, and staff retention.
- **Interactive small group workshops improve professional practice.** Attending interactive workshops with small group discussions and practice sessions to enhance clinical and caring skills are more likely to improve professional practice than traditional lectures. Interactive learning activities, such as small group planning and problem solving, twenty-minute activity cycles, role playing, games, and multimedia presentations, teach front-line staff better teamwork and clinical skills in areas such as incontinence, pain, and hydration.
- **Video training is effective.** Individual, self-paced, interactive video education for long-term care nurses increases attendance and satisfaction with training. In one study, knowledge of core concepts was greater for staff using computer-based interactive video training than attending lectures. In addition, the use of small-group videotape training is an efficient training format that encourages self-monitoring and the exchange of supportive peer feedback. Examples of educational videos are:
 - **Pressure ulcer prevention... What caring people need to know:** Shows caregivers what pressure ulcers are and how they can be prevented.
 - **Stand up and tell them:** Used to understand the current nursing home workplace culture and stimulate sharing about good practices. The video showcases front-line workers telling their stories, including rewards, challenges, and coping skills.
- **Cultural issues in the clinical setting, diabetic compliance:** Latino Video. This video contains seven brief and dramatic vignettes that teach cultural competency.

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Web links

Selected Sample of Games and Simulations in Nursing Homes

Pressure Ulcer Jeopardy www.medqic.org/dcs/ContentServer?cid=1098483002425&pagename=Medqic%2FMQTools%2FToolTemplate&c=MQTools

Teaching the Model for Improvement www.medqic.org/dcs/ContentServer?cid=1095197184557&pagename=Medqic%2FMQTools%2FToolTemplate&c=MQTools

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