

# Module 10 - Relationships with Patients and/or Family

## Introduction

Home care aides may be assigned to care for the same patient for an extended period. It is essential that the home care aide build a trusting relationship and develop rapport with the patient and all others involved with care. By the nature of home care, relationships can often be long lasting and close. Boundary setting is extremely important to ensure a professional home care aide-patient relationship.

## Objectives

At the end of the module, the nurse aide will:

1. Relate professionalism to the role of the home care aide
2. Define rapport and professional boundaries in relation to home care aides
3. List examples of how to develop and maintain professional boundaries
4. Give examples of what constitutes crossing professional boundaries
5. Explain why professional boundaries are sometimes crossed
6. Recognize and report inappropriate behaviors and/or relationships

## Instructional Resource Materials

- Power Point for Module 10 – Relationships with Patients and/or Family
- Activities

## Module 10 - Relationships with Patients and/or Family

Slides	Instructor's Script	Notes
<b>Slide 1</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title Slide – Module 10 – Relationships with Patients and/or Family</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 2</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives – At the end of the module, the nurse aide will:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Relate professionalism to the role of the home care aide</li> <li>2. Define rapport and professional boundaries in relation to home care aides</li> <li>3. List examples of how to develop and maintain professional boundaries</li> <li>4. Give examples of what constitutes crossing professional boundaries</li> <li>5. Explain why professional boundaries are sometimes crossed</li> <li>6. Recognize and report inappropriate behaviors and/or relationships</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 3</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before discussing professional boundaries, let us first look at the role of a home care aide.</li> <li>• The goal is to improve or maintain the health and/or well-being of patients.</li> <li>• For the patient who is dying, the goal is to assist with end-of-life care and contribute to the well-being or comfort of that patient.</li> <li>• The home care aide contributes to a safe, secure, and comfortable home life for a patient.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 4</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are certain standards that home care aides must follow.</li> <li>• For example, aides in a Medicare certified agency must have at least 12 hours of continuing education, or in-service trainings, each year. This ensures that home care aides are up to date on information and guidelines.</li> <li>• Agencies that are not Medicare certified will have different requirements.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 5</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to know the limits of a home care aide.</li> <li>• For example, home care aides should NEVER:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Administer medications; MODULE 24 addresses the role of the home care aide in medication administration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agree to an assignment outside what the nurse or agency has assigned for the home care aide to complete</li> <li>○ Diagnose or prescribe treatments or medications</li> <li>○ Tell the patient or family the diagnosis or medical treatment plan without the patient’s consent</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 6</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developing rapport with patients is an important part of the home care aide’s role.</li> <li>● “Rapport” refers to one’s relationship or connection to another person. This includes verbal and non-verbal communication.</li> <li>● The home care aide will be working closely and closely with his or her patients, therefore, it is important to have good rapport with each patient – both for the comfort of the patient, and so that the home care aide and patient can better understand each other.</li> <li>● It is important that the patient be seen and thought of as an individual. Your patient should not be referred to as, “my diabetic patient at noon.” Your patient has a name and should not be identified by his or her medical condition.</li> <li>● Remember that your patient is shaped by his or her beliefs, values, culture and/or religion. These things combine to make up a unique person. Therefore, you should not expect to treat every patient the same, even if they have the same diagnosis.</li> <li>● Taking the time to build a positive rapport with each patient will make an enormous difference for both the patient and for the home care aide.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 7</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The National Council of State Boards of Nursing has defined professional boundaries as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “...the limits of the professional relationship that allow for a safe therapeutic connection between the professional and the client.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● A “professional” in this context can be a nurse, home care aide, or anyone hired or employed to be in a role where there is care being provided to a person receiving certain services.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 8</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To establish professional boundaries, the home care aide must present him or herself in a certain way.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of how to establish a professional relationship include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain a positive attitude</li> <li>○ Be clean and neatly dressed and groomed; follow your agency's dress code policy</li> <li>○ Be punctual, complete tasks efficiently, and leave on time</li> <li>○ Do only the assigned tasks on the care plan; call the supervisor if you have any questions or concerns regarding the care plan or if the patient requests you to complete tasks other than those assigned</li> <li>○ Be polite</li> <li>○ Address the patient respectfully, for example, Mrs. Jones; ask the patient how he or she prefers to be addressed</li> <li>○ Explain what you are about to with or for the patient before you do it</li> <li>○ Practice safe care technique, for example, hand washing</li> <li>○ Listen to and hear what the patient says</li> <li>○ Be honest</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 9</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The home care aide's employer also has responsibilities in helping its aides reach a significant level of professionalism.</li> <li>• The home care aide's employer should provide:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A written job description</li> <li>○ Competency testing/skills evaluations</li> <li>○ Trainings and in-services</li> <li>○ Appropriate/adequate preparation for each patient</li> <li>○ Supervision</li> <li>○ Supplies needed to safely complete work</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 10</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The home care aide has a unique relationship while working with patients.</li> <li>• Being with a patient who is ill or disabled and working closely with both the patient and the patient's family can be a close and emotional experience for the home care aide.</li> <li>• Sharing in the family's hope, pain, and grief can make the home care aide feel close to the family.</li> <li>• It is especially important for the home care aide who is working with a dying patient to maintain professional</li> </ul>	

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	<p>boundaries at all time, as this may be an especially emotional time for the patient and/or family.</p>	
<b>Slide 11</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional boundaries are established for both the home care aide and for the patient.</li> <li>• Boundaries protect the home care aide from being too involved with patients; likewise, they also protect the patient by keeping the patient at a safe emotional distance.</li> <li>• When relationships evolve from a health care provider and patient relationship into a personal relationship, it subjects both the home care aide and agency to various legal and ethical liabilities.</li> <li>• Healthcare professions, or any other helping or caring profession, have more specific boundaries – many of which are ethical or even legal issues.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 12</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of professional boundaries would include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not engaging in outside/personal relationships with patients; never date or have any type of sexual relationship with your patient or any of their family members</li> <li>○ Remain neutral – do not interfere in a patient's personal relationships</li> <li>○ <b>Always act in the best interest of the patient;</b> if you find yourself wanting to do something because of your own personal gain, it is best not to continue the planned action and speak to your supervisor</li> <li>○ Do not accept gifts or money from patients</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 13</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Activity #1 – Appropriate or Inappropriate</b></li> <li>• Identify whether the listed actions are appropriate or inappropriate.</li> <li>• Discuss/compare your answers as a class.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 14</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In boundary crossing, a professional may cross a line inadvertently or without really thinking it through. It is not necessarily an intentional cross; however, once it is realized, efforts are made to reestablish the boundary.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: A home care aide accepts a small gift from a patient; the home care aide felt it was inexpensive and harmless; however, after accepting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>it realizes that the patient may see the home care aide as more than a caregiver; the home care aide now must work to reestablish that boundary so that the patient is clear on their professional relationship</p>	
<p><b>Slide 15</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With boundary violations, however, the professional may blur the boundary line and cross it for personal gain. There is no effort to reestablish the boundary as the professional now has redefined the roles in his/her mind.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example: A home care aide is having a tough time with her boyfriend; her patient is a good listener, so she confides her problems in her patient; the home care aide feels better after talking with her patient and continues to use the patient as her sounding board and goes to the patient for personal advice on a regular basis; there is no longer a clear, professional relationship between them</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slide 16</b></p>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some examples seem obvious regarding crossing professional boundaries; however, some might seem a bit harsh. It is important to remember that boundaries are established to protect the patient <i>and</i> the home care aide.</li> <li>• Examples of boundary crossing include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accepting gifts or money from patients</li> <li>○ Giving patients personal cell or home phone numbers</li> <li>○ Visiting patients when not working or assigned to that patient</li> <li>○ Befriending a patient or inviting a patient to one's home</li> <li>○ Inappropriate financial dealings with a patient</li> <li>○ Discussing one's personal life with a patient</li> <li>○ Going places with a patient outside of work-related activities and/or duties</li> <li>○ Engaging in close or sexual activities with patients</li> <li>○ Talking to patients about personal information that has nothing to do with their care; small talk or reminiscing can be fine; however, it is possible to get too personal with a patient, which could make the home care aide and the patient feel embarrassed or uncomfortable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Giving advice or judging your patient based on his or her life or decisions</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 17</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Activity #2 – Case Scenarios – Giving and Receiving Gifts</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 18</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Why do boundary crossings or boundary violations happen?</li> <li>● Often it is a well-intentioned home care aide or patient who may cross a line.</li> <li>● A home care aide or patient may try to be nice or not hurt anyone’s feelings and does not realize what is happening.</li> <li>● Home care aides cannot trust that a patient will know professional boundaries. A home care aide must have the knowledge, training, and supervisory support to prevent or correct boundary crossings.</li> <li>● It is a good rule of thumb that if a situation does not feel right, it probably is not.</li> <li>● If you find yourself doing something that you are trying to keep your supervisor or coworkers from finding out about, it is probably time to step back and take a good look at <i>what</i> is happening and <i>why</i> it is happening.</li> <li>● Also, <i>who</i> is benefiting from this situation?</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 19</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Activity #3 – Matching</b></li> <li>● <b>Activity #4 – Take Home Exercise</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 20</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There will be times when patients and/or family members of the patient intentionally or unintentionally cross that boundary and the home care aide will be faced with a potentially inappropriate situation.</li> <li>● The home care aide must know how to deal with inappropriate behaviors or situations.</li> <li>● Be direct and clear, but kind, to your patient or their family member(s).</li> <li>● Report any inappropriate behaviors or statements to your supervisor. If there is a pattern or if the behavior persists, the situation needs to be addressed and your supervisor will handle this.</li> <li>● Likewise, certain inappropriate behaviors may be a sign of illness, and your supervisor will need to know to better assess the health of the patient.</li> </ul>	

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<b>Slide 21</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Activity #5 – Role Playing</b></li></ul>	
<b>Slide 22</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriately interacting with patients and their families can make a difference in both the home care aide's and the patient's satisfaction with services. Always follow the care plan, be clear and polite, and use your supervisor for support and guidance in questionable situations.</li></ul>	