

Module 8 - Providing Care for the Patient Environment

Activity #1 – Case Scenarios

The home care aide is expected to provide care just for the patient to whom he/she is assigned. There are times, however, when family members, or others living in the household, will expect home management tasks to be performed for them as well.

Read the following examples and discuss how you, as a home care aide, would handle these situations.

#1 The Kitchen

Tara sees her patient, Mrs. Smith, daily. On Friday, Tara arrives to Mrs. Smith's home to find the kitchen a mess. Mrs. Smith is widowed and lives alone; however, she had her children and grandchildren over the night before for dinner, resulting in dirty dishes everywhere and food still stuck to pans on the stove. Tara knows Mrs. Smith usually uses only a few dishes each day.

- **What is Tara's responsibility in cleaning up the kitchen?**
- **What are some health factors involved with this situation?**

#2 The Laundry

Kevin is an adult man who lives with his mother, Joan. Sarah is the home care aide who works with Joan. On laundry day, Sarah notices that Kevin has put his dirty laundry in with his mother's in her hamper. Sarah feels the expectation is that she should wash his clothes as well.

- **What should Sarah do in this situation?**
- **What is the best way to approach Kevin and/or Joan about this?**

#3 Mealtime

Erin is the home care aide assigned to Mr. Stevens. Mr. Stevens lives alone. He frequently has company, especially his old Bridge group members. Mr. Stevens' company is over today at lunchtime. He asks Erin to fix enough lunch for everyone. This is not the first time he has asked Erin to cook for a small group of his friends.

- **What is Erin's responsibility in this situation?**
- **What is Erin's best response to Mr. Stevens?**

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Activity #1 – Case Scenarios and Suggested Faculty Responses

The home care aide is expected to provide care just for the patient to whom he/she is assigned. There are times, however, when family members, or others living in the household, will expect home management tasks to be performed for them as well.

Read the following examples and discuss how you, as a home care aide, would handle these situations.

#1 The Kitchen

Tara sees her patient, Mrs. Smith, daily. On Friday, Tara arrives to Mrs. Smith's home to find the kitchen a mess. Mrs. Smith is widowed and lives alone; however, she had her children and grandchildren over the night before for dinner, resulting in dirty dishes everywhere and food still stuck to pans on the stove. Tara knows Mrs. Smith usually uses only a few dishes each day.

- What is Tara's responsibility in cleaning up the kitchen? ***Tara is assigned to care for Mrs. Smith only. Tara should contact her supervisor and seek guidance. Most agencies will speak with the patient and reinforce the aide's role. The aide is not responsible for cleaning after everyone else.***
- What are some health factors involved with this situation? ***Old food and dirty dishes invite pests such as roaches, ants or even mice.***

#2 The Laundry

Kevin is an adult man who lives with his mother, Joan. Sarah is the home care aide who works with Joan. On laundry day, Sarah notices that Kevin has put his dirty laundry in with his mother's in her hamper. Sarah feels the expectation is that she should wash his clothes as well.

- What should Sarah do in this situation? ***Do not wash Kevin's clothes. Inform your patient and her son that your role is to provide care for the patient only. Kevin may not have been informed of your role. Seek assistance from your supervisor if needed.***
- What is the best way to approach Kevin and/or Joan about this? ***These conversations should occur in a non-threatening manner – perhaps by stating, “the agency has sent me to provide care for your mom and I want to do a good job but I can't do work for anyone else in the home.”***

#3 Mealtime

Erin is the home care aide assigned to Mr. Stevens. Mr. Stevens lives alone. He frequently has company, especially his old Bridge group members. Mr. Stevens' company is over today at lunchtime. He asks Erin to fix enough lunch for everyone. This is not the first time he has asked Erin to cook for a small group of his friends.

- What is Erin's responsibility in this situation? ***Erin should provide care for her patient only unless specifically addressed on the care plan. Erin should contact her supervisor to verify her responsibilities and seek guidance.***
- What is Erin's best response to Mr. Stevens? ***“Mr. Stevens, my role is to take care of you, and I want to do an excellent job, but I can only provide care for you and no one else. The agency has strict rules about providing care for others – I am afraid I need to call my supervisor for some guidance.”***

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Activity #2 - Cleaning Schedule

The following is a sample cleaning schedule for a patient who is seen daily. Please keep in mind that schedules and tasks assigned will be different for each patient.

<u>Daily:</u>	Make the bed, straighten up the house/organize the living space, wash the dishes, clean any spills, empty trash cans, clean the bathroom.
<u>Weekly:</u>	Wipe the refrigerator down, mop the kitchen floor, vacuum, or sweep the other floors, dust.
<u>Monthly:</u>	Clean out the refrigerator and defrost the freezer, clean the oven.

Classroom Activity

What other tasks do you think might be required daily, weekly, or monthly for a patient? Complete the blank schedule. Compare your answers with the class.

<u>Daily:</u>	
<u>Weekly:</u>	
<u>Monthly:</u>	

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Handout #1 - Cleaning the Patient's Bathroom

Bathrooms can be a haven for odors, microorganisms, mold, and/or mildew. It is an important room to clean. These guidelines are to assist in the bathroom cleaning process:

1. Gather all necessary supplies (cleaners, sponges, paper towels, gloves, etc.).
2. Put on gloves.
3. Wipe (and rinse if necessary) all surfaces, including faucets and walls/floor of shower/tub.
4. Clean the outside of the toilet using a new, or rinsed out, sponge or clean paper towel. Scrub the inside as well with a toilet brush, paying attention to under the rim. Flush any cleansers you may have used. Follow the clean to dirty concept; for example, clean the sink before the toilet.
5. Sweep or vacuum the floor, then mop if the floor can be mopped. Do not let the floor air dry as it may be slippery and take a long time to air dry. Use a clean cloth towel or paper towels to dry the floor.
6. Clean the mirror or any other reflective surface.
7. Empty the trash can and dispose of any paper towels used for cleaning.
8. Be sure that cloth towels used for cleaning are dry before putting them in the dirty laundry basket/hamper or the towels will mold and mildew. A second option is to launder the cloth towels used along with the bathmats or rugs.
9. Put cleaning supplies back where they are kept. Be sure that all chemicals have labels and do not mix any cleaners or chemicals.
10. Dispose of gloves and wash hands.

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Handout #2 – Laundry

The following is a laundry guide to assist the home care aide in doing laundry for the patient:

1. Sort clothes into separate loads – whites, colors, and darks. Also separate Dry Clean Only clothes and ***Hand Wash Only** clothes.
2. Check pockets for miscellaneous items.
3. Check clothes for stains and assess the need for pretreating. Stains may require pretreatment with a special product; undiluted liquid detergent may be used as well. When possible, treat stains immediately.
4. Review the washing machine instructions for best temperature or cycle such as permanent press or delicate. Ask your patient how he or she would like for you to do the laundry.
5. Add detergent, and fabric softener if needed. Use care if adding bleach. Bleach cannot be used on all fabrics and should never be poured directly onto clothes. Bleach must be diluted with water to avoid staining or bleaching colors.
6. After wash cycle is complete, dry clothes as soon as possible, whether in a dryer or on a clothesline. If using a dryer, be sure to remove clothes that need to be air dried or laid flat to dry.
7. When clothes are completely dry, fold or hang on hanger and put away.

*** Hand Wash Only** clothes will need to be washed in a sink or bucket and laid flat or hung to dry. These clothes may need to soak in soapy water for several minutes before washing or rinsing them. Rinse them thoroughly to be sure all soap has been removed. Always wear gloves when doing any handwashing of clothes.



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Handout #3 – Proper Body Mechanics

While working in a patient's home, always practice proper body mechanics to avoid injury or strain.

1. If possible, avoid lifting heavy objects. If you really must move a heavy object such as a table or bed, try pushing or pulling with your body weight.
2. Bend at the knees when lifting from the floor. Never bend at your waist.
3. Once an item has been lifted safely, carry it close to your body, not out in front or off to the side of your body.
4. When working at a station or counter such as the ones in a kitchen or bathroom, stand close to that area or counter. Stand straight but keep your knees slightly bent.
5. Never bend or lean over a work area for a prolonged period. Raise the work area if possible or move to a different location. For example, instead of folding laundry as you remove clothes from the dryer, move clothes to a different location so folding can be more comfortable.
6. Distribute the home management tasks over the week so that the physically demanding tasks, such as mopping or vacuuming, fall on different days. This will prevent you from having too many heavy tasks on a single day.