

# **Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Fundamentals Training**

Specific Consumer Needs

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# Module 05: Specific Consumer Needs

## Goal

**Introduce candidate PCAs to How to Provide Services to Consumers with Different PCA Service Needs**

# At the end of this training, candidate PCAs should be able to:



**Discuss PCA service goals**



**Understand their own attitudes about aging and disabilities**



**List elements of typical aging processes**



**List causes and names of common illnesses and disabilities**

# Fill in the Blank

**Promote the consumer's \_\_\_\_\_**

**Which word fits best and why:**

- **Independence**
- **Fragility**
- **Strategies**
- **Opinions**

# Fill in the Blank

**Maintain the consumer's \_\_\_\_\_**

**Which words fit best and why:**

- **Dignity and respect**
- **Bathroom and kitchen**
- **Children and animals**
- **Fitness and weight**

# Fill in the Blank

Recognize that the consumer is your \_\_\_\_\_

**Which words fit best and why:**

- Boss
- Patient
- Surrogate
- MassHealth recipient

# Fill in the Blank

Honor the consumer's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**Which words fit best and why:**

- Choice and control
- Pride and prejudice
- Food choices and cleaning preferences
- Independent living and right to fail



# What are your beliefs?

**You need something  
to write with and something to write on  
for the next activity.**

**As we go through the following statements, write  
down the number of the statement and whether  
you think the statement is**

**TRUE or FALSE**

**We'll review your answers later in this module**

# What are your beliefs?

- 1. Sex and intimacy are not important for elders**
- 2. Children with developmental disabilities can learn new things**
- 3. Even healthy seniors should avoid getting exercise in order to save energy.**
- 4. Individuals with physical disabilities also have developmental disabilities**
- 5. Older adults don't care anymore about looking good.**
- 6. Individuals with mental illness cannot work at a job.**

# What are your beliefs?

- 7. Most seniors are sick and in nursing homes**
- 8. It is better for individuals with developmental disabilities to live in institutions.**
- 9. Individuals usually get shorter as they get older**
- 10. Older individuals have trouble hearing, seeing, and keeping their balance**
- 11. Individuals with mental illness can never get well.**
- 12. Losing control over the bowel or bladder is a normal part of aging.**
- 13. Individuals with physical disabilities will have children who also have physical disabilities.**

# What are your beliefs?

- 14. Alzheimer's disease is part of normal aging**
- 15. If your consumer tells you something confidential it is always OK to report that to their parents.**
- 16. PCAs are members of a union and can strike if they do not like their working conditions.**
- 17. Children can't have multiple disabilities.**
- 18. It is common for seniors to have trouble with their sense of smell**
- 19. You should treat individuals with disabilities at their chronological age, even if they act younger.**
- 20. Sudden changes in personality and behavior may be a sign of a brain injury.**

# Normal Aging

**What occurs as a natural part of aging?**

# Sensory Changes

- **We cannot smell things as well as when we were younger**
- **We cannot taste as well**
- **We cannot feel as much with our skin**
- **We cannot see as well - It takes our eyes longer to adjust to changes in light, and it's harder to see at night**
- **We cannot hear as well, or we may have trouble hearing high sounds**

# Physical Changes - 1

- **Our nails get thicker and tougher**
- **Our body gets shorter**
- **Our eyes sink in more**
- **Our skin bruises easily, develops age spots and wrinkles, and looks clear, pale, and thin**
- **Our hair becomes thinner and turns gray**
- **Our weight changes:**
  - **Men often gain weight until age 50, and then lose it**
  - **Women often gain weight until age 70, and then lose it**

# Physical Changes - 2

- **Our heart does not work as well, we get tired faster**
- **It takes us longer to heal or get better after being sick, longer react to things or think**
- **We have more trouble digesting food, keeping our balance, and sleeping**
- **Our bones get weaker, they break more easily**
- **Our muscles get weaker, including the muscles that control our bladder and bowels**



# Aging

- **The changes that come with natural aging do not qualify a senior for PCA services**
- **They must be unable to carry out at least two ADLs**

# Terminology

**What is the difference between an individual with disabilities,  
a handicapped person and a disabled person?**

# People First

**Emphasizes the individuality, equality and dignity of people with disabilities.  
Rather than defining people primarily by their disability**

**The individual with a disability NOT the disabled person**

**The individual who is blind NOT the blind boy**

**The individual who uses a wheelchair NOT the wheelchair bound person**

**The individual who is hearing impaired NOT the deaf girl**

# Working with consumers with brain injuries

- **A brain injury can come from a force within the brain**
  - **Stroke**
  - **Tumor**
- **Or an outside force**
  - **Accident, fall, electrical shock**
  - **Lack of oxygen to the brain**
  - **Motor vehicle accident**

# What a PCA might observe

- **Changes in mood, emotions, thoughts, actions, and behaviors**
- **Seizures/Convulsions (an interruption in brain activity)**
- **Sequencing Problems (difficulties planning, organizing, completing tasks, and/or solving problems)**
- **Repetition of actions and/or comments over and over without awareness**
- **Problems with concentration, distracted, lose focus easily**
- **Sudden changes in personality and behavior**
- **Inability to relate well with others**
- **Poor hand-eye coordination**
- **Decreased vision (poor depth perception or inaccurate vision)**

**What is a developmental disability?**

# Consumers with developmental disabilities

- **Generally, developmental disabilities happen before or at birth**
- **They continue for the consumer's entire lifetime.**
- **There is no cure for developmental disabilities.**
- **Children with developmental disabilities can learn new things; it just may take them longer.**
- **Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to a loss in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas.**
- **These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime.**

# How developmental disabilities occur

- **Brain injury or infection before, during, or after birth**
- **Abnormal genes or chromosomes**
- **Premature birth**
- **Poor diet and health care**
- **Prenatal smoking, drug, alcohol (use during pregnancy)**
- **Child abuse**



# Types of developmental disabilities

- **Cerebral palsy**
- **Autism**
- **Down syndrome**
- **Fragile X syndrome**
- **Fetal alcohol syndrome**
- **Intellectual disability (replaces the term, mental retardation)**

# What a PCA might observe - 1

**Consumers may:**

- **Act like a different person**
- **Be confused about time and place**
- **Forget how to do daily tasks**
- **Not remember things**
- **Swing quickly from one mood to another**
- **Wander**

# What a PCA might observe - 2

## Consumers having trouble:

- **Finding the right words**
- **Finishing a sentence**
- **Keeping their train of thought**
- **Making choices**
- **Thinking**

# Working with consumers with sensory disabilities

**How do your senses help you learn and function in the world?**

# Signs of a sensory disability

- **You cannot usually tell if someone has a disability by looking at them**
- **Sometimes you can tell if they have a sensory disability after you meet them and communicate with them**
- **Some individuals may have certain equipment to help them cope with their sensory disability**
- **Some individuals may have multiple disabilities that include sensory disabilities. For instance, some individuals may be both deaf and blind.**
- **Some individuals with developmental or physical disabilities may also have a sensory disability.**

# How a sensory disability can occur

- **Due to genetics (before birth)**
- **At birth**
- **As the result of an illness**
- **As the result of a traumatic injury**
- **As the result of taking medication or medical treatments (temporary or permanent sensory loss)**

# Types of sensory disability

- **Blindness or low vision**
- **Deafness or hard of hearing**
- **Loss of sensation of heat or cold (touch)**
- **Loss of taste/smell**

# Working with consumers with physical disabilities

**The majority of younger consumers need long-term support services due to some kind of physical disability.**

**How can you relate to a young consumer with physical disabilities?**



# Characteristics of physical disabilities

- **A body part or body system does not function**
- **It may be difficult to do daily activities**
- **May last only for a while or it may last a lifetime**

# Types of physical disabilities

- **Muscular dystrophy**
- **Multiple sclerosis**
- **Spinal cord injury**
- **Cerebral palsy**
- **Parkinson's disease**
- **Loss of limbs**

# Working with consumers with chronic illnesses

**It is important for PCAs to know that having a disability does NOT mean that a consumer is sick.**

**However, many individuals , including people with disabilities, may also have chronic illnesses.**

**Chronic illnesses are ones that are expected to last at least 3 months; some may be permanent, life-long conditions.**

# How chronic illnesses occur

- **Environmental factors**
- **Lifestyle**
- **Infections**
- **Heredity**

# Types of chronic illnesses

- **Alzheimer's disease**
- **Asthma**
- **Diabetes**
- **Heart disease**
- **HIV/AIDS**
- **Allergies**
- **Cancer**
- **Eating disorders**
- **Cystic Fibrosis**

It is common for individuals with chronic illnesses to also suffer from depression, a form of mental illness.

# Working with consumers with mental illness

**There are many definitions for mental health, most include four elements:**

- **Being emotionally stable**
- **Being able to get along with others**
- **Being able to work**
- **Being able to cope with life's challenges**

# Working with consumers with chronic illnesses

**Mental illness can be thought of as a condition or illness that prevents an individual from being successful in one or more of those mental health areas.**

**Mental Illness may affect how an individual thinks, acts, feels and/or perceives  
(understanding of information, situations, or experiences).**

# How mental illness might occur

- **Chemical imbalance in the brain**
- **Heredity**
- **Accident, head injury**
- **Emotional trauma**
- **Drug or alcohol abuse**
- **Isolation from other people for a long time**
- **Other illnesses**



# Types of mental illness

- **Anxiety disorders**
  - **Post-traumatic stress disorder**
  - **Obsessive-compulsive disorder**
- **Mood disorders**
  - **Depression**
  - **Bipolar disorder**
- **Psychotic disorders (Schizophrenia)**
- **Addiction disorders**
- **Personality disorders**
- **Eating disorders**

# Working with consumers with mental illnesses

**Most mental illnesses are responsive to treatment.**

**The most common forms of treatment are medications and psychotherapy.**

**If a PCA is working with a consumer who has a mental illness, they may be oriented by their surrogate on what to do to assist that consumer.**

**Otherwise, they should always be paying attention to changes in their consumers' physical condition and social behaviors, and reporting signs of change that could indicate either physical or mental illness.**

# What are your beliefs?

**We'll now review your answers to the TRU/FALSE statement activity we performed earlier**