

Chapter 1

BECOMING AN IN-HOME AIDE

What You Will Learn

- The role of the In-Home Aide
- Purpose of the Family Care Safety Registry and Employee Disqualification List
- Personal qualities of a successful In-Home Aide
- Qualities of a Professional Caregiver
- Ways to organize your work
- Examples of conduct that will result in legal or disciplinary action

The Role of the In-home Aide

Welcome to the exciting world of healthcare! It takes a special person to give good care to a person who needs help because of an illness or disability. Healthcare is provided in many different places. People can be cared for in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and private homes. This book will focus on the role of the caregiver who gives care to a person in his own home. Most home care is provided by agencies that hire and train caregivers. These caregivers are called In-Home Aides. The In-Home Aide gives personal care to the client in his home and is an important member of the healthcare team.

The caregiver who works in the home usually does not have direct supervision. A licensed nurse is responsible for the care provided. The licensed nurse is usually not present when the care is actually given. Caring for a client in the home may also include preparing simple meals, shopping, and doing light housework and laundry.

The In-Home Aide training program teaches basic nursing care. This includes communication skills, infection control, safety and emergency procedures and basic personal care skills. The In-Home Aide may also perform household duties essential to maintaining the general health, well-being and safety of the client. These duties can include, but not be limited to, disposal of infectious waste, pest control, cleaning soiled linen, meal preparation, and general housekeeping tasks. Conditions in the homes may and will vary. The In-Home Aide may be required to adapt to environmental conditions that include temperature extremes, or working around a clients' family members or pets, smoke, dust or infectious diseases. The In-Home Aide may also be required to shop for essential items and run errands if this task is indicated on the client's service plan.

The Family Care Safety Registry

The Family Care Safety Act requires all people hired to care for children or the elderly to register within 15 days of starting work. If a person is already working in healthcare,

they are not required to register unless they change jobs. All workers hired after January 1, 2001 are required to register. Any worker may voluntarily submit his or her registration at any time.

The Family Care Safety Registry is called the FCSR and was started to encourage family and community safety. The FCSR provides access to background screening information and is available to anyone who hires a person to care for children or the elderly.

The background information is gathered by using a computer to check the:

- State criminal background
- Child abuse/neglect records maintained by the Division of Family Services
- The Employee Disqualification List maintained by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.
- Child care facility license records maintained by the Department of Health
- Foster parent, residential care facility and child placing agency licensing records maintained by the Division of Family Services
- Residential living facility and nursing home licensing records maintained by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

Employees of in-home services provider agencies that have contracts with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services are not required to register. They are allowed to voluntarily submit their registrations at any time.

It is the job of the worker to register. To register, the worker must complete a registration form. The form, a copy of the worker's social security card, and a \$5.00 registration fee is sent to the Department of Health. The worker will receive a copy of the results of the background check. A worker who does not register is guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

Anyone interested in hiring someone to care for a child or elderly person can request information from the FCSR. The caller will need to know the worker's name, social security number, and date of birth. The caller will be given the information while on the phone. After the call, the worker will be sent a letter telling them about the request. The letter will include the name and address of the caller and the information released.

Employee Disqualification List

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services maintains the Employee Disqualification List (EDL). The EDL is a list of people who are not allowed to work in nursing homes, in-home care, and other healthcare settings.

People are placed on the EDL if they have abused or neglected the people they were caring for. Stealing money or property from a client will result in the person being placed on the EDL. The person who is being investigated can appeal the decision.

The information on the EDL is private. Only employers that hire staff to care for the elderly or disabled people can get the information. People who need in-home services for a child, senior, or person with a disability can get information from the EDL. The Certified Nurse Aide Registry is a list of all nursing assistants certified in the State of Missouri. If a certified Nurse Aide is found guilty of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an

elderly client, a federal marker is placed by their name. This federal marker remains on the registry for their lifetime if they were working in a certified facility. In-Home aide providers must check the CNA registry and the EDL when hiring a new employee.

Personal Qualities of a Successful In-Home Aide

The successful In-Home Aide has personal qualities that show an ability to care for others. Qualities of a *great* In-Home Aide are listed in Box 1-1.

Box 1-1: Qualities of a great In-Home Aide

- Pleasant and polite to everyone
- Treats others with respect
- Honest, truthful and genuine
- Good work ethics
- Cares about the feelings of others
- Respects people from different cultures and backgrounds
- Dependable and reliable
- Works independently
- Does the best job possible
- Patient and able to remain calm even when demands are heavy



Qualities of a Professional Caregiver

Clients, families, and co-workers respect employees who behave in a professional way. Professional behaviors include how you dress, the words you use and how you treat others in the workplace. What does “professional” behavior look like? Box 1-2 lists examples of professional behavior.

Box 1-2: Examples of professional behavior

- Always identifies self by name and wearing a name tag/ID badge
- Follows agency dress code
- Wears uniform or street clothes that are clean and pressed
- Uses makeup and cologne in moderation
- Avoids the use of strong scents that can be nauseating to the client
- Shows respect for the client’s home and possessions
- Calls each client by their preferred name and explains the care that will be given
- Encourages the client to make as many choices about his care as possible
- Encourages the client to be as independent in his care as possible
- Does only the tasks assigned and that she has been trained to do
- Listens to the client and is considerate of the client’s privacy and feelings
- Provides care in a safe, competent manner
- Arrives for work on time and knows what is expected of the In-Home Aide
- Is careful with use of supplies
- Calls the agency right away if ill or cannot work according to agency policy
- Always uses body substance precautions when providing care

Professional behaviors should be practiced every day you are on the job. Soon these behaviors will become habits. Professional behavior helps your clients and their families to feel comfortable with you and to trust that you are giving good care.

Organizing Your Work

Good organizational skills are not something that can be taught in a classroom. Even though organization will be covered, you will have to practice the skills each day you are on the job. Organizing your work means deciding what to do first. After getting your assignment from the supervisor, review your assignment and ask questions if you are not sure what is expected of you. Care should be individualized based on each client's needs and their plan of care.

Use your time wisely. Report to work on time and make a list of things to be done. Decide which tasks should be done first and which can wait. Rate each task in order of importance. Plan your day ahead by organizing supplies and equipment.



Being organized makes your job easier. Sometimes priorities change and you may need to adjust your schedule. Being organized also means being flexible and dealing with changes without becoming angry or frustrated.

Conduct that Will Result in Legal or Disciplinary Action

Some types of behaviors are not professional. Arriving to work late or discussing your personal problems with clients or their families is considered unprofessional behavior. Some actions are so serious that they can result in legal or disciplinary action against the caregiver including being placed on the Employee Disqualification List.

Box 1-3: Behaviors that result in legal or disciplinary action

- Verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation of a client
- Being negligent in performance of duties
- Destroying property
- Stealing or taking anything from the client's home
- Disrespect to supervisors, managers and/or co-workers
- Refusal to work where assigned
- Indecent, disorderly, or immoral conduct
- Using alcoholic beverages or drugs for any purpose other than medical, in the client's home or before starting work
- Taking money or goods for personal gain from a client or family member
- Taking gifts or tips
- Having firearms or weapons at the agency or client's home
- Absence from work without notifying supervisor and/or agency
- Smoking in a client's home or while on duty
- Making personal calls on agency or client's phone
- Breach of the client's privacy and confidentiality of information and records
- Falsification of a time sheet, fraudulent documentation

Box 1-3: (Continued)

- Violence in the workplace
- Discussion of own or other's personal problems, religious or political beliefs with the client
- Use of a client's car
- Taking a client's food or drink (except water)
- Bringing other people to the client's home
- Buying any item from the client
- Taking control of the financial or personal affairs of the client or of his estate

The successful employee always does their best and delivers quality care to the clients he/she is assigned to. Remember to perform only tasks that you have been trained to do and are permitted within your job description. Even though the licensed nurse oversees the client's care, you are responsible for your own actions. If you are not sure how to do something, ask your supervisor for direction. Demonstrate professional behavior at all times. Being respectful and sensitive when providing care to your clients lets them know that you truly care about them as an individual.

Chapter Review

1. What is taught in the In-Home Aide training program?
2. What is the Family Care Safety Registry and who is required to register?
3. What is the purpose of the Employee Disqualification List?
4. List five personal qualities of a successful In-Home Aide.
5. What is "professional" behavior?
6. List eight examples of professional behavior the In-Home Aide should demonstrate.
7. What types of behaviors will result in disciplinary or legal actions for the In-Home Aide?

Student Exercise

1. List six personal qualities that demonstrate an In-Home Aide's ability to care for others.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
2. List eight qualities of a professional In-Home Aide.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
3. List two ways an In-Home Aide can organize their work.
4. (**Circle**) the letters that represent conduct or actions by an In-Home Aide that will result in legal or disciplinary action.
 - a. Verbal, physical, or emotional abuse.
 - b. Destroying property.
 - c. Indecent, disorderly, or immoral conduct.

- d. Calling each client by their preferred name.
- e. Using body substance precautions when providing care.
- f. Possessing firearms or weapons at a client's home.
- g. Dressing appropriately for the job.
- h. Smoking in a client's home.
- i. Providing care in a safe manner
- j. Providing privacy for he client
- k. Arriving to work on time.
- l. Being negligent in performance of assigned duties.
- m. Being absent from work without notifying the supervisor.
- n. Refusing to work where assigned.
- o. Wearing a name tag or identification badge with the name of the in-home provider in plain view of the client.
- p. Falsification of a time sheet or documentation.
- q. Taking responsibility for one's own actions.