

# Using Advanced CNA Training to Improve Employee Satisfaction and Patient Outcomes



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## BACKGROUND:

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNAs) serve as the primary caregivers in nursing homes, having far more contact with elderly residents than other members of the staff. This extensive contact with residents/patients has a tremendous impact on their quality of life, but significant barriers limit their caregiving effectiveness.

Researchers believe that it is the physical, emotional and psychological demands of the job, particularly, the high-pressure, fast-paced climate, and the long hours standing and walking, engaging in tasks such as securing and transporting patients in wheelchairs,<sup>[i]</sup> lifting heavy loads, working in awkward positions and transferring residents.<sup>[ii]</sup> Besides the physical demands of the job, working in healthcare can be emotionally taxing. Nurses are constantly interacting with morbidity and mortality, particularly individuals with grave illnesses and disabilities. Furthermore, the understanding that one minor error can be the catalyst for severe consequences can be emotionally exhausting.<sup>[iii]</sup> In some cases, the psychological demands of the job can be just as draining. CNA's, for example, interact and care for a large number of patients with cognitive impairments and deficits, for which they receive very little training. This challenging environment for which CNAs are unprepared contributes to their high turnover rate.<sup>[iv]</sup>

Parker Jewish Institute implemented a CNA training program in the hopes of increasing CNA satisfaction through knowledge acquisition. Parker hoped that CNA's completing this training would have higher skill levels that are more appropriate to the current nursing home population, resulting in increased job satisfaction. A significant benefit is that the CNA will possess improved skills and tools to deliver better patient care in the health care industry.

## METHODOLOGY:

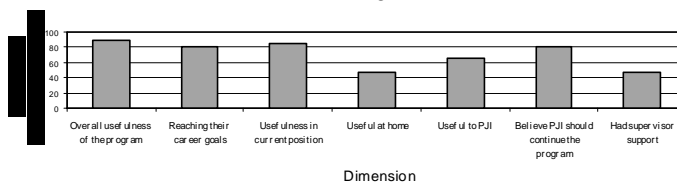
Parker Jewish Institute implemented a facility-based training program to provide CNAs with the advanced knowledge and skills necessary to meet the changing demands of elderly nursing home residents, ultimately leading to improvements in patient care and worker satisfaction. The curriculum, "the Best Care Model (BCM)," was structured to give recognition to the CNAs as having a very important role and to train participants to become better providers to their recipients. The BCM was an 18-week program which focused on integrating the CNAs' experience, their professional personal relationship with the resident, resident's family and daily involvement with the patients. The curriculum consisted of the most common and serious signs, symptoms, and behavioral manifestations associated with six biological systems and the role of the CNA in their management. These systems were: cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological, endocrine, skeletal and integumentary. Instruction occurred throughout an 18-week time frame, and included a 6½ hour training day, in which the a.m. was spent in didactic sessions and the p.m. in a clinical or lab skills session. At the completion of the curriculum, participants were asked to complete a satisfaction survey.

## RESULTS:

Classes ended with the administration of a satisfaction survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather information in regards to the attitudes and feelings of the participants towards the training program. Of the 28 participants, 90% were extremely or very satisfied with the overall usefulness of the program. Eighty percent were extremely or very satisfied with reaching their career goals. 86% of the participants agreed that the program was extremely or very useful in helping with their current position, 46% of the participants agreed that the program was extremely or very useful at home; while 66% agreed to the program being extremely or very useful to the Institute. Similarly, a high proportion of program participants believe that Parker should continue this program in the future (80%), while 13.3% strongly disagree.

Finally, three open-ended questions were asked. To improve the program, the participants suggested a longer training period and more class time. Many of the participants did not like that they had improved their skill set, yet were still "being a CNA doing the same things." Other programs the participants expressed an interest in include: LPN, RN, EKG and Pharmacy Technician.

Satisfaction Scores of CNA Participants  
n=28



## REFERENCES:

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