College of Progressive Education

Healthcare Support: A textbook for Healthcare Assistants

HEALTHCARE SUPPORT: A TEXTBOOK FOR HEALTHCARE ASSISTANTS

HEALTHCARE SUPPORT: A TEXTBOOK FOR HEALTHCARE ASSISTANTS

COLLEGE OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

Edited by Imelda Duffy

GILL AND MACMILLAN

Gill and Macmillan Ltd
Hume Avenue
Park West
Dublin 12
with associated companies throughout the world www.gillmacmillan.ie

© Progressive Education Ltd 2008

978 07171 4512 6

Index compiled by Helen Litton
Design and print origination in Ireland by O'K Graphic Design, Dublin

The paper used in this book is made from the wood pulp of managed forests. For every tree felled, at least one tree is planted, thereby renewing natural resources.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission of the publishers or else under the terms of any licence permitting limited copyright issued by the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xi
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS xii
FOREWORD xiv
INTRODUCTION xvi

CHAPTER 1 – OVERVIEW 1
Background to Healthcare Assistants in Ireland 1
Types of Care Facilities 2
Community Healthcare Assistants 2
Funding for Home-care Packages 3
Overview of Chapters 4
FETAC Assignments 7

CHAPTER 2 – CARE SUPPORT 8
Introduction 8
Relating to Clients 8
Diversity Awareness 9
Partnership Approach to Caring 11
Client Confidentiality 16
Privacy / Dignity / Individuality 17
Advocacy 20
Care Needs 21
Human Growth and Development 22
Reflective Practice 27
Assignment Guidelines 31

CHAPTER 3 – CARE SKILLS 32
Introduction 32
Safe Environment 33
Communication 34
Breathing 35
Eating and Drinking 36
Elimination 37
Personal Hygiene and Dressing 39
Controlling Body Temperature 42

Mobilising 42
Work and Recreation 43
Expressing Sexuality 44
Sleep 45
Dying 45
Pressure-sore Prevention 46
Assignment Guidelines 49

CHAPTER 4 – SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK 50
Introduction 50
Legislation Relating to Safety and Health in the Republic of Ireland 50
Safety Statements 51
Risk Assessment, Hazards and Risks 52
The Health and Safety Authority 53
Safe and Healthy Work Environments 53
Fire 55
Infection Control 57
First Aid 62
Manual Handling 64
Risk Factors in Relation to Health 66
Conclusion 67
Assignment Guidelines 68

CHAPTER 5 – COMMUNICATIONS 69
Introduction 69
The Communication Process 69
Communication and Interpersonal Skills 70
Methods of Communication 71
Barriers to Effective Communication 75
Overcoming Communication Barriers 75
Therapeutic Communication 76
Learning to Communicate Effectively 78
Assignment Guidelines 79

CHAPTER 6 – WORK EXPERIENCE 80
Introduction 80
Globalisation and Demographics 80
Employment Opportunities 81

Skills Audit 83
Work Experience 85
Setting Goals 85
Writing your CV and Application Forms 86
Interview Skills 91
Getting a Job 92
Employment and Equality Legislation in Ireland 92
Assignment Guidelines 94

CHAPTER 7 – CARE OF THE OLDER PERSON 96
Introduction 96
The Ageing Process 97
The Positive and Negative Effects that Ageing has on the Individual 100
The Benefits of Preparing for Retirement 100
Promotion of Healthy Ageing 101
Development of Positive Attitudes towards the Older Person 102
Needs of the Older Person when their Health is Compromised 103
The Role of the Healthcare Assistant 104
Promotion of Healthcare Issues in Care Settings 105
Needs of the Older Person with Chronic Illness 105
Needs of the Older Person with Cognitive Impairment and Physical Disabilities 107
Nutritional Needs Including Special Diets and Specific Needs of Older Residents 111
Care Settings and Services for the Older Person 113
Assignment Guidelines 114

CHAPTER 8 – CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT 116
Introduction 116
What is Challenging Behaviour? 116
Causes of Challenging Behaviour 118
Risk Assessment and Risk Management 123
The Role of Staff in Reducing the Risk of Violence and Aggression 126
Creating Safer Environments 127
Communication 127
Identifying Challenging Behaviour at an Early Stage 128
The Legal and Professional Considerations Required in the Use of Physical Intervention 131
Assignment Guidelines 131

CHAPTER 9 – PALLIATIVE CARE SUPPORT **133**
Introduction 133
History and Definition of Palliative Care 135
How is Palliative Care Practised? 135
Where is Palliative Care Practised? 136
Palliative Care Team 137
Coping Skills for Patients and Families 139
The Role of the Healthcare Assistant 141
Communication Skills in Palliative Care 142
Management of Symptoms 143
Terminal Care 145
Last Offices 147
Cultural Considerations 148
Bereavement 148
Palliative Care for Children 149
Assignment Guidelines 150

CHAPTER 10 – CARE OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS **151**
Introduction 151
What is Mental Health? 151
What is Mental Illness? 152
Causes and Treatment of Mental Illness 153
The Most Common Types of Mental Illness 154
The Mental Healthcare Team 158
The Role of the Healthcare Assistant 160
Holistic Care 160
Assignment Guidelines 161

REFERENCES **163**
INDEX **171**

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW

Annette Kelly

Background to Healthcare Assistants in Ireland; Types of Care Facilities; Community Healthcare Assistants; Funding for Home-care Packages; Overview of Chapters; FETAC Assignments

Background to Healthcare Assistants in Ireland

The healthcare assistant (HCA) is a valued member of the multidisciplinary team who supports the delivery of patient/client care under the supervision and direction of the registered nurse. The HCA engages in both direct and indirect patient/client care. There are many titles associated with the role of the HCA working across the Irish health service, for example *ward attendant*, *care attendant*, *nurse's aide*, *hospital orderly*, *support worker*, *ward assistant* and *auxiliary*. Following the Commission on Nursing, one of the recommendations of the working group was the introduction of the HCA as a member of the healthcare team 'to assist and support the nursing and midwifery function' (DOHC, 1998). Recommendations were also made in relation to the education and training of the HCA. The healthcare assistant (HCA) is the title that is to be adopted across all healthcare settings. The National Health Strategy 'Quality and Fairness, Health System for You' (1998) stated that one of its initiatives was 'to introduce the grade of HCA as a member of the healthcare team to assist and support nurses and midwives' (1998).

Currently there is no statutory requirement in Ireland for the HCA to have completed any recognised training and this is a grave concern for many professionals because HCAs provide care for some of the most vulnerable people in society, i.e. older people and disabled. This situation is about to change with the publication of the *National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings For Older People in Ireland* (2008). This textbook is coming at a very opportune time as most of the modules covered in the FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Healthcare Support touch on many aspects that the various standards outline.

The role of the HCA today is to support the delivery of patient/client care under the direction and supervision of the registered nurse (Shannon *et al.*, 2001). Nursing staff should only delegate duties to the HCA for which she/he has been trained. HCAs are accountable for their actions in providing care to clients/residents, but they must not take on work that they are not trained to provide. The report of the Working Group (DOHC, 2001) states, 'It is essential that healthcare assistants are accountable to the nurse/midwife, clients/patients and to their employer for performing all tasks and responsibilities, including those delegated to them, to the best of their ability' (DOHC, 2001). Duties allocated to the HCA will depend on the care setting, the client's needs and the reporting structure.

Types of Care Facilities

HCAs work in a variety of care facilities in the public, private and voluntary care sectors. The care facilities range from the acute general, maternity and children's hospitals, to the long-stay care facilities. Long-stay facilities can be hospitals and nursing homes that are public, voluntary or private. HCAs also work in the community, in day-care facilities, day hospitals and in the client's own home.

Community Healthcare Assistants

This is a relatively new position that has emerged in the last fifteen years. Until recently, a HCA working in the community was part of the Health Services Executive (HSE). The HCA working under the HSE is part of a team in the community, alongside the registered nurse and the public health nurse (PHN). The PHN has overall responsibility for ensuring that the nursing care needs of his/her area are carried out effectively. There are now many private home-care agencies employing HCAs to provide services to people regardless of age who wish to remain in their own home but need assistance with activities of daily living. Regardless of whether the HCA is working in the public or private sector in the community, many skills are involved. One of the most important things to remember is that as a HCA in the community you are a visitor in the client's home and may be asked to leave at any time. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance as HCAs in the community are placed in a position where they may be the confidant for the client and may hear very personal details of the client's business. HCAs providing care in the client's home can be somewhat isolated, so it is essential that all have a FETAC Level 5 qualification to be in a position to provide quality care. This certificate will assist the HCA to provide 'evidence-based, person-centred care' for all clients under the direction of the registered nurse. Regular updating is required to keep abreast of developments and ensure best practice is followed in all situations.

Funding for Home-care Packages

Most older people prefer to live independently and remain in their own home for as long as possible. In his keynote address at the AGM of Age Action Ireland, Professor Brendan Drumm (CEO, HSE) stated, 'Much greater attention must be given to community and home-care services … so that people could live longer in their own homes without having to go into residential care' (Age Action Ireland, 2007).

Investment of €110m was provided in 2006 and €40m in 2007 by the Minister of Health Mary Harney in the December 2005 budget for improvements in both home and community-based care support for older people. Part of this investment was to provide home-care packages to assist older people to remain in the comfort of their own home, where the majority want to be. The home-care packages are used to fund care services, depending on the client's needs. These packages include the services of nurses, healthcare assistants and many other professionals. By the end of 2007 it is estimated that a total of 2,000 additional home-care packages will provide assistance to older persons to allow them continue to live in their own homes. These packages are seen as a means of keeping older people out of the acute hospital system or long-term care facilities for as long as possible. The Home Care Support Scheme is operated by the HSE and its aim is to assist and support older people who wish to continue to live independently in their own homes but who may require some support to achieve this. The support required will be assessed at a local level, based on specific needs, and each support package will be tailored to the individual. In some parts of the country services are operated by the HSE and in other areas services are delivered by private agencies or voluntary organisations.

The next section provides a brief outline of each chapter. Nine FETAC Level 5 modules are covered in this book. The Healthcare Support Award consists of eight FETAC Level 5 modules. The FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Healthcare Support (DHSXX) has five vocational modules and two general studies modules, one of which must be Communications and the Work Experience module. Three of the five vocational modules are mandatory www.fetac.ie/guide/DHSXX.htm).

The book covers the three mandatory vocational modules, which are Care Skills, Care Support and Safety and Health at Work. It also covers Communications and the Work Experience modules. The elective modules that are seen as most relevant to the care areas in which the majority of HCAs work are covered in the book.

Learners will find a lot of information in the chapters that will assist them during their course and with the various assignments for the modules.

This book is intended as a resource for learners. It is not meant to be all-inclusive for each of the specific learning outcomes of the modules covered; rather it provides support to the taught course.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2

Core principles of care will be explored in Chapter 2. Dignity, respect, confidentiality, client independence and choice are basic core principles that all clients/residents are entitled to, regardless of the type of care facility they find themselves in. These core principles are essential in all care situations and this chapter is based on the FETAC Level 5 Module Support Care. Standard 4 in the *Draft National Quality Standards* deals with privacy and dignity and how these standards are respected and achieved. Standard 17 discusses autonomy and independence for all residents. Maintaining independence and having choice and control over one's life is essential, regardless of where the individual is living. This chapter will also examine the process of reflection and how reflection can be used as both a learning tool and as a means of self-improvement.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 will follow the FETAC Level 5 Care Skills Module, which deals with basic care skills that clients/residents may need assistance with at various stages in their life cycle. This care may be required for people with disabilities, older people or people of any age who, for one reason or another, require assistance with activities of daily living. The role of the HCA in the prevention of pressure sores will also be discussed. This module has a very practical approach and basic care skills are taught in the classroom and practised in the clinical area. Assessment of clinical competence in specific care skills is undertaken by the registered nurse in the clinical field.

Chapter 4

The FETAC Level 5 Safety and Health at Work Module will be outlined in this chapter. This module is a generic module for many major FETAC awards. When it is taught as part of the FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Healthcare Support, greater emphasis will be put on specific aspects of safety and health relevant to the healthcare environment. The principles of infection control will be outlined, with emphasis on the prevention and control of cross-infection in all care facilities. Given the problems with MRSA and other infections in hospitals, nursing homes and the community, it is essential that updates on current 'best practice' in all aspects of infection control are provided for all care staff. Members of care staff are faced with many challenges in preventing the spread of infection. Every worker must take responsibility for their practice and must adhere to the correct protocols and procedures that are in place to reduce and minimise the risk of infections to clients/patients. Information on the correct disposal of clinical and non-clinical waste is required for all care staff. Hand hygiene is the single most important

factor in the prevention of cross-infection and is seen as vital in the control of the spread of MRSA. All staff must be updated on a regular basis to ensure that correct procedures are being adhered too. This is crucial in today's healthcare environments where infection is causing great distress and pain to clients while at the same time increasing overall costs of care. It is essential that the HCA is fully informed and updated on his/her role and responsibilities in the prevention of the spread of infection. Standard 26 in the *National Quality Standards for Residential Settings for Older People in Ireland* deals with health and safety of the residents, staff and visitors. The issue of raising awareness on other aspects of health and safety issues in the care environment will also be covered. The responsibilities of the employee and employer under health and safety legislation will be discussed.

Chapter 5

Communication skills are essential in any environment and it is vital that all healthcare assistants practise good communication skills in all care situations. While most of the modules that make up the FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Healthcare Support cover aspects of communication, Chapter 5 is dedicated specifically to this FETAC module. The module is a generic module for most major FETAC awards, but, when taught as part of the FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Healthcare Support, greater emphasis will be given to equipping the HCA with the necessary skills to communicate effectively with clients/residents in the healthcare environment. The chapter explores therapeutic communication skills in meeting the needs of clients/residents with various communication deficits and difficulties. Communicating effectively and appropriately with the large range of disciplines that are involved in healthcare is essential for the smooth running of the service. The various methods and skills used to communicate effectively will be outlined.

Chapter 6

This chapter discusses the FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Work Experience Module and how it will assist HCAs to reflect on their work experience and use the knowledge gained in the course to improve their care work. Experiences from other work environments can be transferred to the care sector and this module will assist in identifying particular skills relevant to care. Guidelines for finding a job and preparation for interviews, are also outlined.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 looks specifically at the FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Care of the Older Person Module. This module is essential for the majority of HCAs who work with older people,

regardless of which care setting this may be in. The ageing process will be discussed and how it affects the various body systems. The specific needs of older people, depending on their care requirements, will be outlined. This period in life can be identified by failing health and loss of independence. Coping with illness, loneliness, loss of loved ones and a realisation of mortality are challenges that face the older person. Dealing with this stage of life depends on the extent of the emotional and physical support available and the ability of the older person's coping mechanisms which they have developed over the years. Demands for providing care for older people will increase with the projections outlined. This demand will occur in both the community and the residential care facilities. This module will assist HCAs to have a better understanding of the needs of the older person and how these needs can be met in an individualised, person-centred manner.

Chapter 8

The management of challenging behaviour is an ever-increasing issue in all care facilities. The *National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People In Ireland* states, 'All staff have up-to-date knowledge and skills appropriate to their role, to enable them to manage and respond to behaviour that is challenging (Standard 21, Criteria 21.4, HIQA, 2008). Chapter 8 gives an overview of the FETAC Level 5 Challenging Behaviour Management Module (locally devised). This module has a very practical focus which deals with how best to manage challenging situations in care environments. It is a beneficial module for all care staff in order to impart the knowledge and skills that are needed to manage residents/clients whose behaviour is challenging, correctly and effectively.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 looks at the FETAC Level 5 Palliative Care Support Module. Grief, loss and care of the dying person are discussed. These topics can be distressing for anyone, and HCAs need guidance and knowledge in their role in order to care for older people with dignity towards the end of life. Apart from providing physical care, the psychological needs of the dying also need to be addressed. There has been no suitable accredited course available to date for HCAs to meet these challenges and this module goes some way towards addressing this deficit.

Chapter 10

Mental health is a very important and relevant topic in today's demanding environment. The FETAC Level 5 Care of People with Mental Illness Module was developed to equip

care staff with some basic knowledge and skills to be able to give care to clients under the direction and supervision of the registered nurse or the registered psychiatric nurse. An understanding of what mental health is and some of the mental illnesses that people can suffer from will be discussed in Chapter 10. Many clients/residents who need care due to medical conditions and/or advancing years may also suffer from various mental conditions. It is important for care staff to have a basic knowledge of these conditions as some residents' behaviour may be frightening to those who do not understand. Mental illness can be viewed by many as something to be ashamed of and some knowledge can help to remove this stigma.

FETAC Assignments

All FETAC Level 5 modules have a minimum of two assignments that learners have to complete to the required standard to achieve the minor or major award. The following is a list of assessment techniques that may be found in the various modules: Project, Skills Demonstration, Learner Record, Examination, Collection of Work and Assignments. Briefs with specific guidelines and detailed marking criteria will normally be provided by the tutor and/or the provider of the course. The briefs provide guidelines to assist the learner when preparing and writing the assignments. Clinical care skills are assessed and marked by the registered nurse in the workplace, while projects and other knowledge-based assessments are corrected by the course tutor. Assignments for one module can be utilised for another module once the criteria and marking schemes are matching. A brief outline of the assignments that are required for the modules covered in this book will be given at the end of each chapter.