

## **BASIC HUMAN NEEDS**

### **Introduction: Basic Needs**

Every person has certain basic needs that must be met so that he can survive. A need is a requirement for survival. Sometimes an individual can satisfy his needs himself, and sometimes he requires help. When a person becomes your client, it means he is unable to satisfy all his needs himself. (For example, a person may need help with his meals or he will not be able to meet his need for nourishment.) As a homemaker/home health aide you will help your client meet some of his most basic needs until he is able to meet them without your help.

It is important—and often difficult—to be sure the actions of the health care team are meeting the client's needs. Your knowledge of these needs and your objective observations will help your supervisor determine whether all the needs in a particular home are being met by the plan of care.

### **BASIC PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS**

All human beings have basic physical needs that must be met in order to live. These needs do not all have to be met completely each day, but the more each person's needs are fulfilled, the better the quality of life.

Psychological needs also must be satisfied to have a healthy emotional and social outlook. As with the physical needs, these do not have to be met totally each day. However, the more completely each need is met, the better the person's emotional state will be. Needs can be met by family, by self, or by someone who is not a family member but is available on an intermittent basis.

### **BALANCING NEEDS**

Family members usually meet the needs of children. During adult years, most people are expected to meet some or most of their own needs. All of these physical and psychological needs overlap and affect each other. Each person determines his own particular balance. When one need is out of balance due to illness, the other needs are also affected. For example, when a person is ill and requires more rest, his food intake must be changed to meet this change in activity. His clothing will change. His weight may change, and his mood may alter. The client is often the one who knows how to restore balance. In this case the client might determine when to eat and what foods to decrease so that he does not gain weight. By consulting the client, you will be more apt to meet actual needs and not guess what they are. Needs can change, so be alert.

Many things can change a client's behavior and attitude during an illness. The client may be frightened, angry, or sad. Some factors or influences may be the diagnosis, seriousness of the illness, age, previous illness, experience, and the mental condition. Other things that can make a difference are the client's personality, financial situation, and family relationships.

Each client has different reactions to pain, treatment annoyances, and even kindness. Always treat a person as an individual. Do not compare one client to another. Practice consideration on an individual basis. Encourage the client to take an active part in setting the balance between his activities and his basic physical needs. All behaviors have meaning. If you observe a behavior that you do not understand, discuss this with your supervisor. If you notice a change in behavior, report it.

### **NEEDS YOU HAVE AS A HOMEMAKER/HOME HEALTH AIDE**

Homemaker/home health aides have the same basic needs as their clients. It is important that your needs be met, too, but not at the expense of your client's. There are many times your needs will have to be put aside until you leave the client. Discuss with your supervisor both your client's needs and yours. Then a plan will be made so that the needs of the client will be satisfied and you will not feel slighted. Caregivers

must be alert to the reasons they do and say things. As you are caring for your clients, be alert and try to identify what basic need you are satisfying and whose it is. Ask yourself these questions:

- Are you acting because the client's needs must be met or because your needs must be met? For example: Are you giving the client a bath because he will feel better or because you will feel better having done it?
- Do you perform a procedure with the client because he enjoys having your help and shows improvement or because you feel you must do it?
- Does helping a client become independent, so he no longer needs your help, make you feel good or useless?

## **UNMET NEEDS**

When basic needs are not met, human beings show some reaction. If a physical need is not met, the reaction is usually obvious; for example, if the need for food is not met, the person might become irritable or weak. If an emotional need is not met, a person's reactions may be feelings of anxiety, depression, aggression, anger, or a physical ailment without apparent cause.

You will not always be able to decide why a client acts in a certain manner. That is all right. It is necessary, however, for you to report these actions to your supervisor. Often by reviewing client's actions, your supervisor will be able to determine if a need is going unmet. Then, by alerting the plan of care, the need will be fulfilled and the behavior changed.

## **PAIN**

The word pain means different things to different people. What is painful to one person may not be to another. It is important to find out how your client reacts to pain and how his family views pain. Many people think that pain is normal and must be tolerated; some feel it is a punishment; some do not want to complain; some people are afraid of medications; and some are afraid that, if they complain their caregivers will leave them. Some people are afraid to discuss their pain with their physicians because they feel that if the physician could relieve the pain he would do so without asking.

Clients who are in pain are unable to participate in their care, relate to their families, or expend energy on the healing process. Clients who are in pain cannot have a good quality of life.

Pain causes many reactions. Some you can see and some you cannot see. A client in pain may:

- Have a rapid pulse, shallow and rapid breathing
- Have increased fatigue
- Have increased anxiety
- Have increased stress
- Withdraw and decrease communication
- Decrease food and fluid intake
- Make faces and make gestures with his hands
- Moan and talk in baby talk and cry
- Demonstrate angry behavior

Different cultures treat pain in different ways. Some cultures may hang a charm near the bed; some may say special prayers; some may burn candles; and some may dress the client in special clothes. If these help the client, support the actions even though they may seem unusual to you. Some people do not want to take medication. They are afraid they will become addicted, be questioned by the authorities or bring shame to their family and to themselves.

The health care team is becoming more and more aware of the many things that contribute to an individual response to pain. Medication is becoming more and more acceptable and available to clients at home who

are in pain. When it is prescribed by a physician and given as it is prescribed, no one should be afraid to take it. Your role as a homemaker/ home health aide is to help the client and his family manage the pain. This can be done in many ways.

- Ask the client what usually decreases his pain. Do not change his routine!
- Talk to the client. Explain what you will do and how he may help.
- Allow the client to move at his own pace. Do not rush him.
- Support the medication schedule. Encourage the client to take medication before the pain becomes severe.
- Encourage the family to support the client as he deals with pain.
- Observe the client for any increase of pain. Alter your care accordingly.
- Report to your supervisor if the client's pain changes or if he does not respond to his medication.
- Encourage the client to share his feelings about his pain.
- Encourage the family to share their feelings about the client's pain, his reaction to it, and his medication regime.