



Developing Top-Notch CNAs, One Inservice at a Time

A Safety Module: Taking Care of Your Back

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SUPERVISOR

Step One:

- Make a copy of the Instructions for the Learner page. Return your original to the sheet protector. Add the following information to the copy:
 1. The name (or position) of the person to whom the aides should direct questions.
 2. The name (or position) of the person to whom the aides should turn in their quizzes.
 3. The date by which the quiz page should be turned in.
 4. The name (or position) of the person who will initial the aides' Inservice Club Membership Cards.
- Use this copy as your "master" as you make up the inservice packets.

Step Two:

- Have the following copied for each learner:
 1. The **Instructions for the Learner** page.
 2. The **10 Page** Inservice newsletter.
 3. OPTIONAL: Your workplace policy for using mechanical lifts and any other transfer devices used in your workplace, along with your workplace's "No Lift" policy, if one is in place.
 4. The **Quiz** page.

Step Three:

For Self-Study Use

- Distribute as desired—in employee mailboxes; folded in paychecks, etc.
- You may want to post the Quiz Answer Sheet in a prominent spot.

For Group Use

- Read over the Suggested Participatory Activities, the Suggested Teaching Tips and the Suggested Discussion Questions.
- Select the activities you want to use during your inservice hour.



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SUGGESTED PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY # 1: TAKE AN EXERCISE BREAK...WHILE YOU SIT

Tell the group they can help keep their backs strong by doing exercises—even while sitting through this inservice!

Lead the group through the following (sitting) exercises:

1. Face forward. Slowly turn your head toward your right shoulder, as far as you can go without strain. If you can, look behind you, over your shoulder. Now, turn back to face front. Do this five times. Now, do it on the left.
2. Sit straight with you feel flat on the floor. Hold the sides of your chair with your hands. Now, slowly raise your thighs a few inches off the seat of your chair. Do this five times.
3. Lace your fingers behind your head and push your elbows straight back. Hold for three seconds, then release. Repeat this five times.
4. As you exhale, slowly lean forward, dropping your head toward your knees and letting your hands drop down to your ankles. Hold this position for five seconds. Now, as you inhale, slowly lift your head. Next, exhale and stretch your arms up toward the ceiling. Repeat five times.

ACTIVITY #2: BACK PAIN RISK ASSESSMENT

- Make copies of the Back Pain Risk Assessment and distribute them to the group.
- Assure the participants that this assessment is for their personal use and will not be collected.
- Encourage them to answer honestly in order to get an idea of their risk for back pain.
- Give them a few minutes to finish the assessment.
- Ask for volunteers who wish to discuss the results of the assessment. Encourage the group to discuss habits that they plan to change in order to protect their backs.

ACTIVITY #3: BALLOON BED - A TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITY!

- Explain to the group that none of the equipment, training or "No Lift" policies will be of any use unless the team members are able to support one another and work together. Use this activity to promote communication, teamwork and mutual support for co-workers.
- What you'll need: At least one balloon for each person and a few fat tipped permanent markers.
- Give each participant a balloon to inflate and tie. Ask each person to write their name on the balloon with the permanent marker. In addition to their names, ask each participant to write one thing they do to support their team members on a regular basis.
- Now, ask one person to volunteer to be the "floater!"
- The challenge is to balance the floater on a bed of balloons. The team members can only touch the person and the balloons to get the positioning right, but eventually must remove all contact and let the person rest with only the support of the balloons!



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SUGGESTED TEACHING TIPS

TEACHING TIPS

- Make an overhead of the Quiz Answer Sheet.
- Take advantage of this inservice time to go over your workplace policies on using mechanical lifts and any other transfer devices used in your workplace, along with your workplace's "No Lift" policy, if one is in place.
- Take some time to allow participants to discuss their reaction to:
 - The "Connect It" box on page 3,
 - The "What Excites You" box on page 5,
 - The "What I Know Now" box on page 10.
- If possible, ask a physical therapist to attend this inservice to discuss body mechanics and specific exercises your staff can do to strengthen and protect their backs.
- If you spot your nursing assistants performing their work using poor body mechanics, stop them and demonstrate proper techniques. Likewise, if you spot nursing assistants using correct body mechanics and/or posture, praise them!

RESOURCES

The following resources were used in developing this inservice. You might want to check them out for further information:

- [Back Pain Remedies](#) by M. Sinel, M.D. & W. Deardorff, Ph.D.
- Spine Universe at www.spineuniverse.com
- Web MD at www.webmd.com
- MedlinePlus at www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/backpain.html
- North American Spine Society at knowyourback.org
- American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at www.aapmr.org
- Mayo Clinic at www.mayoclinic.com
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases at www.niams.nih.gov

More to Learn!

Your staff may enjoy the following related In the Know inservices:

- Using Assistive Devices
- Home Care Safety Tips
- Understanding Fall Risk Factors
- Performing Safe Transfers
- Caring for Bedbound Clients
- Overview of the Human Body
- Passive and Active Range of Motion Exercises
- The Importance of Activity in the Elderly
- Working with a Team

If your In the Know library doesn't include these titles, they are available for purchase by calling our toll-free number:

877-809-5515



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SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

In this inservice you learned that stress is a risk factor for back pain and/or injuries. Why do think this is so?

- ANSWER: Stress affects your body by attacking the weakest parts. If your back and/or abdominal muscles are weak, they can become knots of tension when you are under stress. When muscles are tense, they become starved for oxygen—and they hurt! Tension can also cause muscles to pull unevenly on your bones and joints. Eventually, your body gets pulled out of alignment. If you have back pain, try reducing your stress to see if your pain decreases (or even goes away).

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

You know you are supposed to always ask for help when you need it, but what should you do if you work in the client's home and don't have a coworker around to help?

- ANSWER: Keep in mind that the rate of back injuries for home health workers is more than *double* the national average. If you have doubts about your ability to transfer a client by yourself in the client's home, discuss the situation with your supervisor. Remember, it's a question of the client's safety and your health. If you attend a weekly client care conference, this is a good time to bring up any transfer issues. The nurses and therapists may have some suggestions for you or they may be helpful in getting the client or family some transfer equipment.

HERE ARE MORE QUESTIONS THAT MAY SPUR SOME INTERESTING DISCUSSION:

- Have you ever had back pain? If so, what has helped it to go away?
- Have you ever worked with a sore back? If so, did it help or make the situation worse?
- What would you do if you suddenly found yourself unable to work and support your family because of back pain? What if that pain was a result of a work-related injury that you never reported? Unreported injuries may not qualify for workers' compensation to help cover the costs of your injury.
- What are some ways you could protect your back as you go through your daily work?
- What would you do if you saw your co-worker who was placed on "light duty" trying to lift or transfer a client on her own?



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QUIZ ANSWER SHEET

1. The bones that make up the spine are called:

B. Vertebrae. Vertebrae are connected together by discs, ligaments, joints, and muscles. They are named by the first letter of their region (cervical, thoracic, or lumbar) with a number to indicate their position.

2. Most nursing assistants who hurt their backs at work, do so while:

A. Lifting or moving a client.

3. A new nursing assistant on your team asks you for advice on preventing back injuries on the job. The best advice you can give her is to:

A. Maintain a healthy weight and strong core muscles.

4. A pain that begins in the buttocks and travels down the back of the thigh and calf is probably a:

C. Pinched nerve (or sciatica). A pinched nerve or sciatica causes a burning or tingling feeling down the leg.

5. False

Corrected Statement: A "No Lift" policy means that **clients who cannot sit unsupported and bear weight**, must be moved by mechanical lift.

6. True

The group of muscles that support your spine are known as the "core muscles." A strong core is essential to a healthy back.

7. False

Corrected Statement: Always bend your **KNEES**—not your **WAIST**—when picking something up.

8. False

Corrected Statement: If you hurt your back at work, the first thing you should do is report to your supervisor and file an incident report.

9. True

Having good posture is essential to having a healthy back.

10. False

Corrected Statement: A **RARE** treatment for many common back injuries is bed rest. It's rare for a doctor to recommend bed rest. Most injuries get better faster if you continue to move around in ways that don't make the pain worse.



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BACK PAIN RISK ASSESSMENT

How high is your risk for back pain? Answer these questions, add up your score and find out...

HOW OLD ARE YOU? Score _____

- If you are **under 30**, your score is **0**
- If you are **30 to 39**, your score is **1**
- If you are **40 to 65**, your score is **2**
- If you are **over 65**, your score is **3**

DO YOU SMOKE? Score _____

- If you **don't smoke**, your score is **0**
- If you **do smoke**, your score is **1**

ARE YOU OVERWEIGHT? Score _____

- If you are **not overweight**, your score is **0**
- If you weigh **0 to 5 lbs** too much, your score is **1**
- If you weigh **6 to 10 lbs** too much, your score is **2**
- If you weigh **11 to 15 lbs** too much, your score is **3**
- If you weigh **16 to 20 lbs** too much, your score is **4**
- If you are **more than 20 lbs** overweight, your score is **5**

DO YOU EXERCISE? Score _____

- If you **never exercise**, your score is **3**
- If you exercise **1 time per week**, your score is **2**
- If you exercise **2 times per week**, your score is **1**
- If you exercise **3 times per week**, your score is **0**
- If you exercise **4-7 times per week**, you need to **subtract 1** point from your score

DO YOU LIFT HEAVY OBJECTS? Score _____

- If you **never** lift heavy objects, your score is **0**
- 1 to 2 times per month**, your score is **1**
- 3 to 4 times per month**, your score is **2**
- 5 to 6 times per month**, your score is **3**
- 7 to 8 times per month**, your score is **4**
- More than 8 times per month**, your score is **5**

ALREADY HAD BACK PAIN? Score _____

- If the answer is **no**, your score is **0**
- If the answer is **yes**, your score is **3**

YOUR TOTAL SCORE: _____

What Your Total Means:

- 0** Wow! You really take care of your back. Congratulations! You have no risk of back pain.
- 1 to 4** Your risk is low. Keep up the good work.
- 5 to 8** You have a potential risk for back pain.
- 9 to 12** Your risk for back pain is moderate. Try to learn all you can about how to protect your back.
- 13 to 16** You have a significant risk for back pain. You need to change your habits prevent problems.
- 17 to 20** You are at serious risk for back pain!!!



IN THE KNOW

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*A Complete Civility Training Program: **The Real Healthcare Reform***

AND ALSO FROM IN THE KNOW...

CIVILITY TRAINING PROGRAM PACKAGES

How Many Learners?	Your Cost*
12	\$182.26
24	\$271.77
50	\$449.00
100	\$742.00
150	\$898.50
300	\$1,497.00

WHAT YOU'LL GET:

- A copy of *The REAL Healthcare Reform* for each of your learners
- The Companion Instructor's Manual
- Engaging classroom activities and discussion questions
- Convenient PowerPoint presentations
- Tips for improving participation and keeping yourself organized
- A CD with master PDF copies of all the handouts and presentations
- **SIX HOURS** of inservice credit for your CNAs

* Plus shipping

ARE YOU READY TO DELIVER A COMPREHENSIVE **CIVILITY TRAINING PROGRAM** WITHIN YOUR WORKPLACE?

Did you know the Joint Commission recommends that all accredited healthcare organizations be responsible for handling and preventing incivility in the workplace?

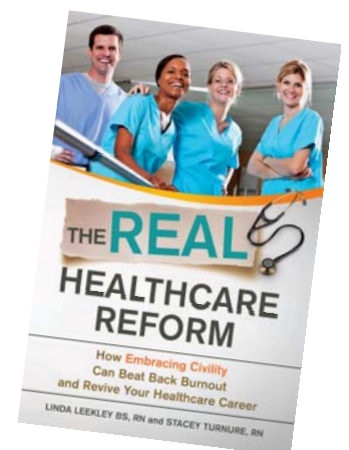
Civility training in the healthcare workplace is more than just a course in professional conduct—although professional conduct is the goal! Civility training teaches:

- Self-awareness
- Personal and professional integrity
- Communication skills
- A sense of ownership in the workplace
- Personal empowerment to solve problems with energy, creativity and enthusiasm

Based on the bestselling book "The Real Healthcare Reform," our Civility Training Program is unique because it immerses learners in the material in a fun and engaging way. **The program is written for all healthcare employees, clinical and non-clinical, and will benefit everyone in your organization.**

GET STARTED TODAY!

Choose the package that fits the number of learners you wish to reach, then call us toll free at **877-809-5515** to place your order!





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EVALUATION

Employee Name _____

Date _____ Self-Study Inservice Group-Study Inservice

1. Put a checkmark in the box that best describes how you feel about each learning objective.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	I am able to do this.	I might be able to do this.	I can't do this.	I'm not sure.
Name at least four factors that put people at risk for back problems.				
Describe two common back problems.				
List at least three ways that back pain is treated.				
Discuss how strengthening your "core muscles" can protect you from work related back injuries.				
Demonstrate correct posture and body mechanics as you function in your job.				

2. Did you learn anything new that will help you in your job? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

3. If you have questions about the inservice information that did not get answered, note them here:

4. Other comments? _____

