

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

“Competency Based Training”

BQIS/Outreach Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life.

Objectives

Understand the differences between competency based training and other types of training such as “read and sign” training

Understand why competency based training is vital in many areas of care

Understand how to develop competency based training as well as track staff progress on competency based skills for retraining as needed

Recognize that, in assisting person with a disability, correct and consistent implementation of plans can be a matter literally of life and death.

Definitions

Task Skills: Individual Tasks or steps of a task that one can perform.

Competency: The state of having sufficient skill, knowledge, and experience in an area and/or demonstrated ability to perform a certain task independently according to established criteria.

Skills Gap: The difference between what a person can do and the skills required to perform the job.

Physical Learners: People who learn best through hands-on exercises.

Facts

- Competency Based training emphasizes not only what a person knows at the end of the training, but how a person uses this knowledge. For a person to be assessed as competent, he or she must demonstrate the ability to perform the trained task and duties to the standards expected by the employer or trainer.
- The trainer may determine the need to provide competency-based training on one skill for one individual based on the complexity and individuality of the task. In these situations, being trained to competency to perform a task for one individual would not transfer to the same type of task for another individual.

- Physical Learners in particular will demonstrate a higher level of competency when presented with hands-on exercises.
- The best way to learn a skill that requires hands-on performance and thus prevent a “skills gap” is to provide hands-on training with sufficient practice and feedback to assure the learner knows what is expected and can perform the skill with complete proficiency.
- Written tests which try to assess physical skills are not effective because people can often repeat the steps to a task, but may actually perform the task differently than they explain it.
- When the task is very important, such as the administration of CPR, certifying bodies require the learner to demonstrate not only knowledge competency, but physical competency, in order to pass the class. The more important the physical skill, the more vital it is to offer instruction in a Competency Based format.
- Competency based training decreases confusion, empowers staff to know when and how to provide appropriate interventions, and decreases apprehension in the client when working with a less familiar staff.
- Competency based training also demonstrates to all involved that an intervention completed in a particular way can be done, is effective when implemented, that needed supplies are available, and that needed equipment is present and functioning correctly.
- Being trained to competency for a particular task does not mean the person can train others on the task.
- Competency-based training for certain delegated nursing tasks requires the provision of on-going monitoring by the Registered Nurse to ensure continued competency.

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Prevent situations in which an employee cannot perform a task properly by using competency based training.
2. Break down the steps of a given task to develop a checklist to be used to assess the learner’s level of skill and to help that person make adjustments as needed. One method to do this is document in writing each essential step of a given task while a competent person performs it.
3. The instructor demonstrates the appropriate way to complete a task and then observes the learner perform the same task, giving appropriate feedback and correction until the employee is perfectly proficient.
4. The instructor documents competency for each skill and person.
5. The instructor determines the need for and implements on-going monitoring system to ensure continued competency.
6. The instructor/supervisor re-confirms competency for each skill annually or more frequently if indicated.

Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person’s competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. Which of the following skills should be trained with a competency-based method?
 - A. Modifying the diet or fluid texture to reduce the risk of choking.
 - B. Lifting an individual who requires total assistance
 - C. Using sighted-guide instruction with an individual who is blind
 - D. All of the above

2. A staff person knows and can recite all of the steps to take to implement a behavior management plan. Does this mean he or she is necessarily competent?
 - A. Yes, he/she has passed the written and verbal exercises, and we require nothing more.
 - B. No, even though he/she knows what to do, we have not established that the steps are carried out as outlined.
3. Who will benefit from a Competency-based approach to training?
 - A. The House Manager and Case Manager, who are assured that staff can carry out a given task
 - B. The staff, who know what is expected and why the method that they have learned is best
 - C. The Individual, who has been assured consistent care by all of her staff
 - D. All of the above

References

Competency Based Training: A-Z Resources

www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/resources/competency_based.htm

Related Resources

Outreach Services has examples of Competency Based checklists and other materials

www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/4066.htm

Learning Assessment Answers

1. D
2. B
3. D

Outreach Services

outreach@fssa.in.gov • DDRSOutreach.IN.gov

As a service for persons supporting individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, BQIS/ Outreach developed the Outreach Fact Sheet Library. The information provided is designed to enhance the understanding of the topic and does not replace other professional or medical instructions or individually developed plans. For more fact sheets and information, please visit DDRSOutreach.IN.gov.



Indiana Family & Social Services Administration
Division of Disability & Rehabilitative Services
Bureau of Quality Improvement Services

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