

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS COUNCIL

# Brain Injury Training

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## Respite Care Strategies

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## Environmental

### Visual

- Present visual information in a clear and uncluttered way
  - Keep only up to date and relevant information on walls/bulletin boards
- Post orienting information
  - Staff names, pictures
- Post important health reminders



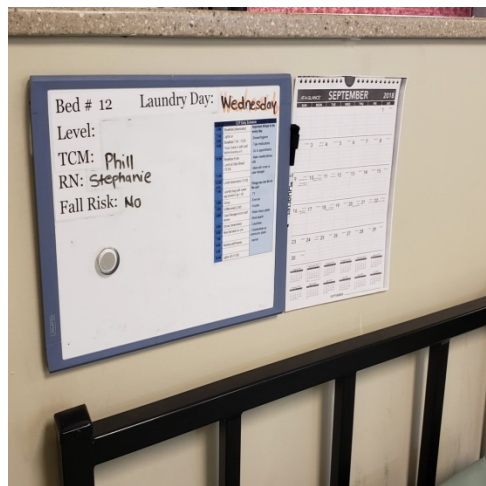
*Staff pictures with names are posted*



*Reminder at food station*

### Organization

- Provide adequate storage to minimize clutter in personal areas/bed space
- Provide and promote use of tools for organization and self-management
  - Calendars
  - Whiteboards to write down information
  - Have daily schedules easily available



*Whiteboard includes key information and a copy of the unit's daily schedule*

*Calendar is available next to whiteboard*

# Medication Management

## *Learning Medication Instructions and Information*

- Provide opportunity to practice following medication instructions
  - Clients may need help to simplify examples
  - Have clients demonstrate dosing/how to take medication
- Give step by step instructions for multi-step health management activities
  - Give feedback to prevent the client from making mistakes during the task  
Example: When learning how to use a glucometer, focus on learning each step one at a time. Do not allow the client to complete steps incorrectly and see if they can “figure it out”
- Provide direct education on special instructions (such as take with food)
  - Clients may need help to problem solve how to apply these special instructions
- Help clients identify where to put taking medications into their daily routine
  - Easier to coordinate with established routines, such as meals, brushing teeth, etc.
- Provide clients or help clients develop a simplified medication list or card that includes the name of their medications, purpose, and a picture if appropriate  
*(See Appendix for an example pillcard)*
- Use written logs of taking medications to increase awareness and track adherence  
*(See Appendix for an example medication tracker)*
- If possible, assist client in advocating for simplified medication regimens
- If prescribing, keep medication dosing instructions simplified or direct  
Example: Take one pill by mouth in the morning and evening

## Organizing Medications

### PILLBOXES

- Assess if client is able to use pillbox
  - Are they able to identify days of the week
  - Are they aware of the current day of the week
  - Can they differentiate between AM and PM
- Provide pillboxes to organize medications
  - If possible, pillboxes should be a best fit for prescribed medications.  
Example: If client takes medications 4x/day, pillbox should have 4 dosing times
  - Clients may need to learn how to organize pillbox using errorless learning or direct teaching strategies
- Help clients set-up and organize task of sorting medications into a pillbox
  - Have a system to separate medications that have been put in the pillbox, that need refills, and that need to be put in.
- Modify pillboxes as needed
  - Use visual cues to differentiate AM and PM
    - Different colors
    - Sun and moon stickers
  - Clients may need additional container to take middle of the day medications with them, and keep regular pillbox with their routine belongings
    - Container ideas: Tic tac or Altoid containers, small pillbox, Ziploc bags, etc.



### OTHER STRATEGIES

- If possible, some clients may need pre-organized pillboxes or pillpacks/bubblepacks
- Clients may opt to label medication bottles  
Example: Writing AM or PM on the top of bottles to easily identify.
  - Systems for labeling pillboxes should be identified by client if possible
- Consolidate bottles of medications as much as possible, and teach clients proper ways to discard medications no longer needed

## *Calling for Refills*

- Assess if client can identify when to call for refills
- Help clients develop system for identifying when to call for refills before running out
  - Calendars or phone alarms can provide notification
  - When running out of medications while filling pillbox or when bottles are empty after filling pillbox
  - When available, use automatic refill systems at the pharmacy
- Demonstrate or call with client to make refills
  - Some clients may have difficulty with phone trees or dialing in Rx numbers and will benefit from learning how to talk directly to a pharmacist
    - Indicators that using touchpad systems to dial Rx numbers will be too difficult include: visual problems, decreased fine motor skills, slowed processing or comprehension, flusters or frustrates easily
- Help client identify ways to problem solve if they have issues with refills
  - Example: If client has 0 refills left they can call their provider, schedule an appointment, etc.

# Appointment and Health Management

## *Organizing Appointments*

- Use external cues to record appointments. Use only 1–2 methods/strategies
  - Calendars, phone alarms, appointment cards
- Cue clients to use identified strategies
  - Example: Ask a client to look at their calendar to see if they have any appointments for the day
- If necessary have clients prioritize treatments to increase attendance
  - Example: If a client has multiple specialty appointments, a 3x/week schedule for PT may not be feasible
- Help clients identify a plan for attending appointments.
  - Do they have a ride?
  - Do they know what time they need to leave to arrive early/on time?
  - Do they need to bring in any special paperwork?

## *Learning Health Information*









- Strategies for low health literacy are effective for those with cognitive impairment
- Help to simplify or clarify important health information
  - Information may need to be presented at lower reading levels
- Provide clear and concrete options or instructions

## *Organizing Health Information*

- Help clients identify a system for storing and keeping track of health information.
  - A notebook that includes doctor names and contact information, diagnoses, and medications may be helpful to bring to appointments especially if a client has multiple providers
  - Clients may benefit from folders to organize paperwork from various providers

### *Other Health Management*

- When making referrals...
  - Does the client know why (and value the potential outcome)?
  - Does the client have a plan for how they would remember the appointment?
  - Does the client have a plan for transportation and other details to attend the appointment.
- Consider escorts for: moral support, for a reminder, and to support the processes for initial appointments

Medication and dose	Picture	When to Take	Purpose
Losartan -25 mg		Morning (AM)	Blood Pressure
Furosemide (also called Lasix) -80 mg		Morning (AM) and Night (PM)	Fluid/Blood Pressure
Metoprolol -50 mg		Morning (AM)	Heart Rate
Aspirin -81 mg		Morning (AM)	Protect against heart attack and stroke
Prilosec (also called omeprazole) -20 mg		Morning (AM)	Acid Reflux (sour stomach)
Melatonin -2 mg		Night (PM)	Sleep
Magnesium -400 mg		Morning (AM)	Helps muscles work better
Trazodone -50 mg		At night (PM)	Sleep



# Medication Tracker

Medication	Yellow		Green		Blue		Purple	
<b>R<sub>x</sub></b>								
Day of the Week	AM Time	PM Time	AM Time	PM Time	AM Time	PM Time	AM Time	PM Time
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments/Notes:

