Brain Injury Training

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](image1)

![Reminder at food station](image2)

**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](image3)

![Calendar is available next to whiteboard](image4)
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

Acknowledgements for contributions to this document: Chauna Brocht, LCSW-C; Mara Schneider, MS, OTR/L
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication and dose</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>When to Take</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Losartan -25 mg</td>
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<td>Morning (AM)</td>
<td>Blood Pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furosemide (also called Lasix) -80 mg</td>
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<td>Morning (AM) and Night (PM)</td>
<td>Fluid/Blood Pressure</td>
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<td>Metoprolol -50 mg</td>
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<td>Morning (AM)</td>
<td>Heart Rate</td>
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<td>Aspirin -81 mg</td>
<td></td>
<td>Morning (AM)</td>
<td>Protect against heart attack and stroke</td>
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<td>Prilosec (also called omeprazole) -20 mg</td>
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<td>Morning (AM)</td>
<td>Acid Reflux (sour stomach)</td>
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<td>Melatonin -2 mg</td>
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<td>Night (PM)</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
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<td>Magnesium -400 mg</td>
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<td>Morning (AM)</td>
<td>Helps muscles work better</td>
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<td>Trazodone -50 mg</td>
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<td>At night (PM)</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
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# Medication Tracker

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication</th>
<th>AM Time</th>
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Comments/Notes: