Maximizing Brief Encounters

Realizing Measurable Gains
A project funded by...
The Northwest Health Foundation

Collaborators

- Southern Oregon Senior and Disability Services
- Food & Friends (Meals on Wheels) Program
- Oregon State University Extension
- Oregon State University College of Pharmacy
- Oregon Health Sciences University School of Nursing
- Community health and nutrition professionals
Rationale:
Volunteers who deliver meals to placebound older adults are in the community every day. These volunteers can be taught to perform simple health-related interventions to assist the food recipients in continuing to live independently.
Goals of the Project...

- Hold focus groups/design curriculum
- Train meal program volunteers
Goals of the project continued...

Train volunteers in:
- Communication
- Sensory difficulties
- Memory Loss
- Depression in Later Life
- Medication Management
- Food Safety
- Home Safety
- Community Resources
Goals of the project continued....

Evaluate impact:
- Retrospective self-evaluations
- 3-month follow-up interviews
- 6-month follow-up interviews
Results of the Project:

- Curriculum designed/well accepted
- Specific learning exceeds expectation
- (Statistically significant) knowledge gains made in every single class
- Follow-up interviews demonstrate measurable impact on the community
Curriculum designed/well accepted

- 2 sets of eight classes
- PowerPoint and hands-on learning approaches
- Active involvement of learners
- “Caregiver Helpbook”
Specific learning exceeds expectation

- Trainees fully engaged
- Frequent indications of post-class use of techniques
- Requests to join class series by other volunteers
- Evaluations strong
Statistically significant knowledge gains in all classes

- Evaluations indicate information was learned
- Participants report constant use of knowledge in the community
- Behavior changes identified
Follow-up interviews demonstrated continuing impact

- Nursing students interviewed all trainees 4 months later
- Findings indicate unexpectedly high evidence of continuing use of information
So, what’s in this curriculum?

- Common sense information about age-related health problems
- Practical approaches to encouraging simple lifestyle and behavioral changes
- Information about how to respond to emergencies and when to refer
Curriculum framed around improving communication....

- Observe
- Listen
- Validate (support)
- Respond
  Report (if needed)
Class # 1: Communicating Effectively with Aging Persons

- How important is attitude to good communication
- Basic communication strategies
- Communication challenges as we age
- How to overcome communication challenges
Class #2: Relating to Persons with Sensory Impairment

- Common age-related changes in the senses
- How these changes make a person feel
- How to relate to someone with a sensory loss
- How to help someone overcome a sensory loss
Class #3: Understanding Age-Related Memory Loss

- How to identify normal age-related changes in memory
- Ways to manage memory loss
- How to identify memory loss linked to dementia
- How to communicate effectively with people who have memory loss
Class #4: Recognizing Medication Problems

- How age-related changes affect the actions of medications
- Reasons for medication misuse
- How to prevent problems
- How to deal with adverse medication reactions
Class #5: Recognizing and Responding to Depression

- How does depression differ from grief
- How to recognize depression
- What places a person at risk of depression
- Strategies for working with depressed individuals
Class #6: Understanding Foodborne Illness

- Which groups are at greatest risk
- The importance of handwashing
- What factors are key to ensuring food safety
- Symptoms of foodborne illness
Class #7: Addressing Home Safety

- Signs that indicate a home is unsafe
- Ways to make a home safer
- First Aid ideas for any home
- Basic knowledge about CPR
Class #8: Knowing and Using Community Resources

- Knowing where to look for assistance
- Knowing how to connect the needy person with the right resource
- Knowing when...
Additional Project Activities

- Program newsletter re-designed, with a healthy aging focus, distributed quarterly
- Newspaper columns published to complement all classes (35,000 subscription circulation)
- Project used to support fund-raising efforts for the meal delivery program
Program Benefits...

- Strong cross-disciplinary partnerships established
- Memory, Medication Management classes taught widely in other venues
- Medication Management class leads to another funded grant
- Classes proposed as on-going component of service delivery system
Program Benefits continue...

- Adoption by local Department of Health for senior peer counselors (who do home visits for mental health clients)
- Program offered in area Assisted Living environments for both staff and resident education
Comments from the Participants

“We were given information on medications and how to organize them. I helped organize one person’s medication and now she’s doing fine. Before she was getting dizzy.”

“You know, for some people I deliver food to, I may be the only person they see for that week. The depression class helped me help them.”
Comments from Participants

- "The training helped me know how to intervene with another volunteer. I convinced her to go the the doctor and get her meds changed. She’s doing much better."

- "I never knew depression was manifested in so many ways. It was an eye opener."

- "One of my food recipients is deaf and now I’m more aware of what to do."
Future Applications

- Full series available for distribution nationwide in June 2003
- Individually expanded Medication Management and Age-Related Memory Impairment Curriculums available currently
- Presentations adaptable to different program needs and diverse populations
Healthy Aging: Food & Friends

Instructional Package available for purchase: June, 2003

- PowerPoint curriculums, with comprehensive teaching notes, (disc and hard copy)
- Retrospective self-evaluation format
- Tiered evaluation follow-up (approaches and format)
- List of recommended teaching aids
- PowerPoint overview
For further information...

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