

# ***Helping Hands Homecare Agency***



Curriculum Project

Gwendolyn Childress and Alfreda Lewis

ADED 7060

Auburn University/ Auburn Montgomery

### **Description of the Organization**

Helping Hands Health Care is a full-service home care agency committed to providing the highest level of professional and compassionate care to clients at their residence in a safe and comfortable environment. We are striving to become one of the leading home healthcare services in the industry as demonstrated by our phenomenal growth in 2011 through word-of-mouth referrals from satisfied customers. The agency was founded in 2010 by licensed registered nurses with over 25 years of geriatric and special needs experience with the mission of “improving quality of life through the delivery of compassionate, uncompromising, and affordable service in the tri-county area”. Although this limited liability corporation was founded using a traditional 3-level organizational structure (**Level 1**--CEO, **Level 2**--DON, Office Manager, and Scheduling Coordinator, and **Level 3**--Manager of Information Systems, and Receptionist), a management “open-door policy” serves the mission goals well in promoting customer satisfaction.

Helping Hands employ only highly-trained, licensed and certified Registered Nurses (RN), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), and Home Health Aides (HHA) to deliver the quality care that you deserve. Individualized plans of care are designed to meet all rehabilitation needs, managed by an interdisciplinary team consisting of the Medical Social Worker (MSW), Occupational Therapy (OT)/Certified Occupational Assistant (COTA) and/or Physical Therapy (PT) Physical Therapist Assistant (LPTA) to ensure the client become as independent as possible, as quickly as possible. Our

services, including on-call nurses, are available 24 hours a day, 7 days to assist in patient emergencies as needed.

Acute and chronic care services include minor and major wound care, foley catheters/ostomy care, enteral/parenteral therapies, infusion therapies, monitoring of acute conditions, medication instruction disease management education, and more.

### **Situation Analysis Summary**

Helping Hand Homecare Agency is a fast growing homecare agency in Montgomery, Alabama, providing care that adheres to all mandated federal, state and medical guidelines for in-home care. In that the company's policy is to continually strive for excellent care in all areas of service based on evidence-based research, needs assessment are conducted quarterly to maintain current and future growth trends. The current quarterly assessment for change revealed a potentially damaging communication deficit among office and field staff. Field staff including nurses, physical therapists, and occupational therapists felt that the lapsed time from receipt of new patient referral data by office staff to the time this data reached appropriate field staff for processing and timely patient visits was insufficient for field staff to meet initial visit goals per Medicare guidelines. It was further noted that this gap in communication adversely affected the working relationship between both departments leading to decreased employee morale and potential medication/treatment errors. Also, this potentially affects ongoing relationships between referring physicians and Helping Hands stakeholders, leading to poor performance improvement scores. As a result of this first quarter needs assessment, an interdisciplinary team consisting of office, auxiliary, and field staff personnel was assembled to brainstorm for methods of improving communication and paper flow methods to promote a high performance environment by decreasing and/or eliminating incidents. Upon completion, findings and recommendations will be discussed with all departments to ensure that our employees receive current patient care education and training. The projected implementation goal date is set for February 25, 2012. This dynamic approach to problem-solving recognizes the need for employee in-services routinely and involvement in decision-making to help ensure employee satisfaction as well as helping to ensure ongoing patient needs are met.

## **Needs Assessment Plan**

### **Unfavorable Situation**

Communication deficit among office and field staff: Field staff states they are not receiving referral information in a timely enough fashion to meet the initial visit requirements per Medicare guidelines. Staff further states there is an overall lack of communication between office, auxiliary, and field staff departments causing potential deficit in quality of care extended to patients.

**Approval for development of interventions to correct unfavorable situation granted by Helping Hands CEO.**

### **Procedure**

An interdisciplinary team consisting of office, auxiliary, and field staff personnel was assembled on February 13, 2012 to develop methods for correcting and enhancing agency communication.

### **Purpose**

1. Provide a systematic set of scientifically based guidelines to be adapted by Helping Hands to enhance communication between departments.
2. Foster a team-centered approach to management of current and future unfavorable agency situations.

### **Team Recommendations**

It was decided that data to define the need and communicating this definition throughout the agency would be collected in two phases:

Phase 1: On February 27, 2012, a 10-item Likert Scale Questionnaire would be given to all office, auxiliary, and Field staff to assess the respondent's attitude toward current communication and paper flow procedures.

Phase2: On February 28, 2012, conduct a focus group interview to ask follow-up questions to enhance final training methods.

### **Activities**

Week of 03/05/12 – 03/09/12, conduct a systematic review of literature for effectiveness research and decision support tools to develop material to correct current communication problems.

03/26/12 - implement office personnel training session

03/28/12 - implement auxiliary personnel training session

03/30/12 - implement field staff personnel training session

## Communication Questionnaire

We would like to know how confident you are in the communication skills within the agency. For each of the following questions, please choose the number that corresponds to your confidence in the agency communication skills at the present time.

Strongly												Strongly
Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Agree	

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1. Do you feel that you receive needed referral/intake information in a timely manner?
2. Do you feel that you receive changes in patient status within a timely manner?
3. Do you feel that you are update on changes in agency policy and procedures in a timely manner?
4. Do you feel that interoffice staff member communicate information in a clear and concise manner?
5. Do you feel that management listens to your needs?
6. Do you think that you are a valued employee?
7. Do you think that you are able to present issues to the agency without criticism?
8. Do you think that the agency will responds to the issue that you present?
9. Do you think that communication training with assist in improving communication procedures
10. Are you willing to participate in a communication training session?

Absent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent
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11. Rate the current communication skills within the agency?

## **Plan for Determining Work Setting and Learner Characteristics**

Helping Hands Home Health Care is an organization that provides intermittent skilled nursing and other therapeutic services on a visiting basis to persons in their homes. The criteria by which this agency functions, processes, and measures outcome include, but are not limited to:

### **Doing the Right Thing**

- **Efficacy** – The degree to which the services performed has been shown to accomplish the desired outcome.

### **Doing the Right Thing Well**

- **Timeliness** – The degree to which the service is provided to the client at the most beneficial or necessary time.
- **Effectiveness** - The degree to which services are provided in the correct manner, given the current state of knowledge, to achieve the desired or projected outcome.
- **Respect and Caring** – The degree to which the client or employee is involved in decision-making concerning patient care and agency procedure, such that those providing the service and the client receiving the service, have a mutual sense of respect and honor in meeting company goals.

The target training population includes the 7 member office personnel team, 5 member auxiliary team personnel, and the 12 member field staff team. This population is directly involved in the day-to-day process of collecting and maintains documentation: receiving data from a referral source, verifying financial ability to pay for services, distributing validated data to auxiliary and field staff for processing and admission to services, and returning and storing completed documentation in a secure and professional manner.



The work setting for the office personnel is a very busy 7-room administrative suite situated on the first floor of the agency location to facilitate ease of access for clients and personnel alike. The 3-office wing located adjacent to the administrative suite houses offices for the auxiliary personnel who functions in a support capacity to the administrative department. The field staff (visiting personnel) has cubicles in one of the larger auxiliary offices which they use for charting, patient contact, and varied administrative duties. It is the policy of Helping Hands to maintain documentation in accordance with accepted professional standards and federal/state guidelines; therefore, all visiting personnel visit the physical location at least 3 times weekly to comply with mandated clinical records regulations.

All training will be conducted on the premises in the agency conference room which can be altered to a less formal setting to facilitate ease of communication, trust, and a sense of belonging.

### Job Analysis/Content Analysis Plan

Helping Hand Homecare Agency's goal is to deter negative on-the-job attitudes, behaviors and practices. The practices and behaviors associated with performance issue are centered around ineffective communication between the interoffice and field staff. Each staff member perceives that the other can improve his or her communication skill. This consensus was gathered by using a communication questionnaire, which each employee was requested to complete and return anonymously. As a result, Helping Hand Homecare Agency has developed a training program for each employee based on his or her job title and expertise.

The quality, credibility, and usability of the training material specific to the needs of the Helping Hands interoffice and field staff was researched via internet search using Medscape, ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source database, Health Service Journal Online, and Evidence-Based Nursing. The evidence-based, best practice CORE model of course development and training recognized by the National Training and Education Division (NTED) of FEMA (2011), was used to develop training skills for our upcoming communication skills training program. CORE is used to symbolize four stages for the development of new course/training activities: Confirm, Organize, Review, and Enable Stages as shown below:



The Confirm Stage will be used for the development of Helping Hands Job Analysis/Content Analysis. During the Analysis phase, we conducted target audience, content, task, learning breakdowns. Each activity of this data collection is listed sequentially below:

**Task 1.** Learner Analysis was used to determine our target audience and identified our primary audience to be the interoffice, auxiliary, and all field staff personnel.

- It was determined that all personnel in these groups possessed the skill level to successfully complete the planned educational training.
- Attitudes toward upcoming communication training were determined to be 100% in favor of the training. Survey questionnaires revealed a preference for the conference room, informal training method as the most effective for this group.

**Task 2.** Environmental Analysis was used to assess the appropriateness of the facility conference room for conduction of the communication training for this group of learners:

- Compatibility of Site with Instructional Requirements – This learning environment supports our instructional goals and conducive to adaptability of delivery approaches as needed.

**Task 3.** Job Analysis was conducted to provide a detailed listing of the duties and tasks necessary to perform the specific jobs of each of the affected departments identified to this unfavorable situation. Data for this analysis was collected from observation, interviews, and documentation:

- Interviewed personnel related to individual job duties, grouping tasks according to common characteristics, (including expected duties and perceived time needed to perform duties).
- Collected data (e.g. survey) based on employee feedback. Sample questions included:
  - How frequently was the task performed?
  - What percentage of the workday does the target audience spend on this task?
  - How critical is it that task to the success of the job?

- The results were analyzed against set objectives of providing a systematic set of scientifically based guidelines to be adapted to enhance communication between departments. Close scrutiny was paid to tasks currently being performed, as well as those that should be performed, but are not yet identified, the crucial nature of the task to be performed, and the minimum standard of performance for the task (what determines the go/no level for the task).

### **Purpose and Objectives**

Upon the completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

- Discuss key points to establish effective communication.
- List three concepts of effective communication.
- Apply the fundamental concepts of communication to problem resolution.
- State three common barriers to effective communication.
- Discuss the responsibility of each separate department in coordinating the paper flow, and follow-up to promote effective patient care.
- Apply knowledge gained in learning module to accurately document paper flow and communication channels in case study scenario.

## Objectives and Assessment

### Learning Objectives to “Bridge the Departmental Communication Gap”

1. Describe how to find common ground with clients, supervisors and co-workers (knowledge).
2. Learn strategies to effectively negotiate goals with others (Skill).
3. Explain how to reduce stress within working groups by opening lines of communication (knowledge).
4. Strengthen and develop diplomatic skills in challenging situations (knowledge).
5. Describe which work processes are open for diplomatic negotiation and which are not (attitude).
6. Explain the real meaning of a “win/win” solution (knowledge).

### Assessment Strategies

#### **Knowledge**

- Multiple choice exam – to be given final day of seminar.
- Matching exam – to be given final day of seminar.

#### **Skill**

- Atomistic behavioral assessment tool to determine if behaviors were performed. Assessment tool to be administered by management staff member 2 weeks after completion of seminar.

**Helping Hand Healthcare Services**  
**“Bridge the Departmental Communication Gap”**  
**Lesson Plan**

**Objectives and Goals**

The purpose of this session is to improve the communication between interoffice staff and field staff members.

Upon completion of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Describe how to find common ground with clients, supervisors and co-workers (knowledge).
- Learn strategies to effectively negotiate goals with others (Skill).
- Explain how to reduce stress within working groups by opening lines of communication (knowledge).

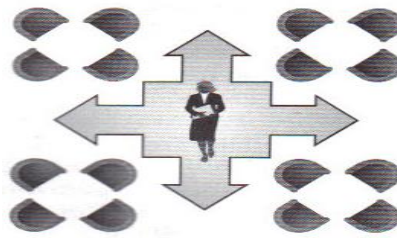
Time	Content	Methods	Resources
0800		Introduce self	Overhead #1 (Write welcome and name on overhead)
0810		<b>Set Induction</b> What is this is all about? In the medical workforce, effective communication is a key principal in ensuring that day-to-day operations are efficient and that patient receive the optimal level of care. Also, it ensures that staff practice in a safe and organized manner.	
0815		<b>Group discussion</b> Ask the class to raise their hands to contribute to a discussion of what they already know about effective communication in the workplace.	Overhead #3 (write answers on overhead)
0830	Discuss objective #1 Describe how to find common ground with clients, supervisors and co-workers (knowledge). 1.Listen 2. Ask clear concise questions 3.Be mindful of what is said and not said 4. Respect others	<b>Lecture/Discussion</b> Discussion Question: How can you find common ground with someone that appears to have nothing in common with you?	Overhead #4

0840	<p>Discuss objective# 2 Learn strategies to effectively negotiate goals with others (Skill).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Talk to the coworker who can make a difference</li> <li>2. Be open to different options, and look for win-win situations</li> <li>3. Prepare options before hand</li> </ol>		Overhead #5
0850	<p>Discuss objective #3 Explain how to reduce stress within working groups by opening lines of communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning better communication skills</li> <li>2. Recognize and effectively use the nonverbal cues</li> <li>3. Resolve conflict positively.</li> <li>4. Praise good work performance, both verbally and officially.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Lecture/Discussion</b> Discussion Question: How do you maintain your sanity in the work place?</p>	Overhead #6
0900		<p><b>Closure Activity</b> Completion of a questionnaire</p>	Overhead 7 (Questionnaire)



## Facility and Media Specifications

### Modular Seating



Helping Hands' conference/training room is a very large 75 Ft X 100 Ft air-conditioned room situated on the first floor of a busy 7-room administrative suite. Because the conference room is situated at the west end of the suite, distractions are minimal; Hall traffic and intercom interferences are easily controllable. Additionally, padded walls render this room conducive for privacy and confidentiality needs. The building was constructed in 2008, so all electrical units are efficiently placed and adaptable to all media needs.

The modular seating arrangement was chosen to meet training delivery goals:

- Facilitation of small group discussion.
- Facilitation of interaction purposes of brainstorming, group discussion, and teamwork.
- Foster informal training session thereby encouraging open, honest dialogue.

Helping Hands' Need Assessment Plan identified ineffective communication and specific negative performance issues as unfavorable situations requiring immediate correction. The training methods that will be used in this training session will encourage teamwork among trainees because:

- The sessions will include opportunities for learners to work in small groups on exercises and problems.
- The trainer can move between groups to monitor progress during lectures and activities.
- The trainer is perceived to be more accessible and personable by group facilitating ease of communication.

## **Program Support Plan**

**Purpose:** Support activities that will be used to implement employee communication and skill performance training session in an effort to meet program objectives.

**Program Background:** Helping Hands is an innovator in ensuring that day-to-day operations are effortless. As unfavorable issues arise and are identified by a team of outcome specialists, intense efforts are directed at immediate correction of potentially harmful conditions to continually meet needs of employees and patients. The current training session is but one example of the company's diligence in caring out the mission goals of excellent care for all patients.

**Program Strategy:** Addition of a renowned motivational communication specialist company to Helping Hands' support team. The team plans weekly topics and interactive material to enhance communication among staff members. This communication service specializes in various techniques to induce employee learning, minimize negative feedback, and distractions. Other benefits include:

- Built-in technical support division (ensures that media equipment such as computers, overhead projectors, DVD players are working at optimal level.
- Technical Support Team Support Division manages any unforeseen issues that may arise such as equipment malfunction, computer viruses, etc., 24 hours a day.
- Assist staff members with technical support including desktop computers, applications, and related technology.

**Limitations to Program Support Plan:** Manpower limitations and prioritization of support based on Technical Support Team's assessment. Therefore, few foreseeable problems are anticipated.

## **Helping Hands Homecare Agency Communication Training Program Evaluation**

### **Program Purpose:**

The overall purpose of the program is to enhance communication between departments and to foster a team-centered approach to management of current and future unfavorable agency situations.

### **Evaluation Purpose:**

The primary purpose of evaluating Helping Hands' Communication Training Program is to determine the success of the program, which teaching method is conducive to ensuring employees learning, and confirm that employees are able to:

- Describe how to find common ground with clients, supervisors and co-workers.
- Learn strategies to effectively negotiate goals with others.
- Describe which work processes are open for diplomatic negotiation and which are not.

If goals are met, effective communication among staff, decreased errors, and more efficiency in day-to-day operations will be less challenging.

### **Evaluation and Data Process**

The program will be evaluated by using employee feedback forms and a 10-question questionnaire, both focusing on knowledge gained by employees and which method of teaching fostered learning. The Quality and Assurance Director (QAD) will ensure that all employees complete the questionnaire bi-annually, after completion of the Communication Program, and/or after new hire orientation to ensure that the company is advancing towards improvement and excellence. Data collected from these evaluations will be stored in the QAD office and analysis by using SPSS. If data collected is not favorable, the agency Chief Executive Officer and Director of Nursing will review downfallen areas and devise a plan of action to promote change in that particular area.

### **Program Evaluation Plan**

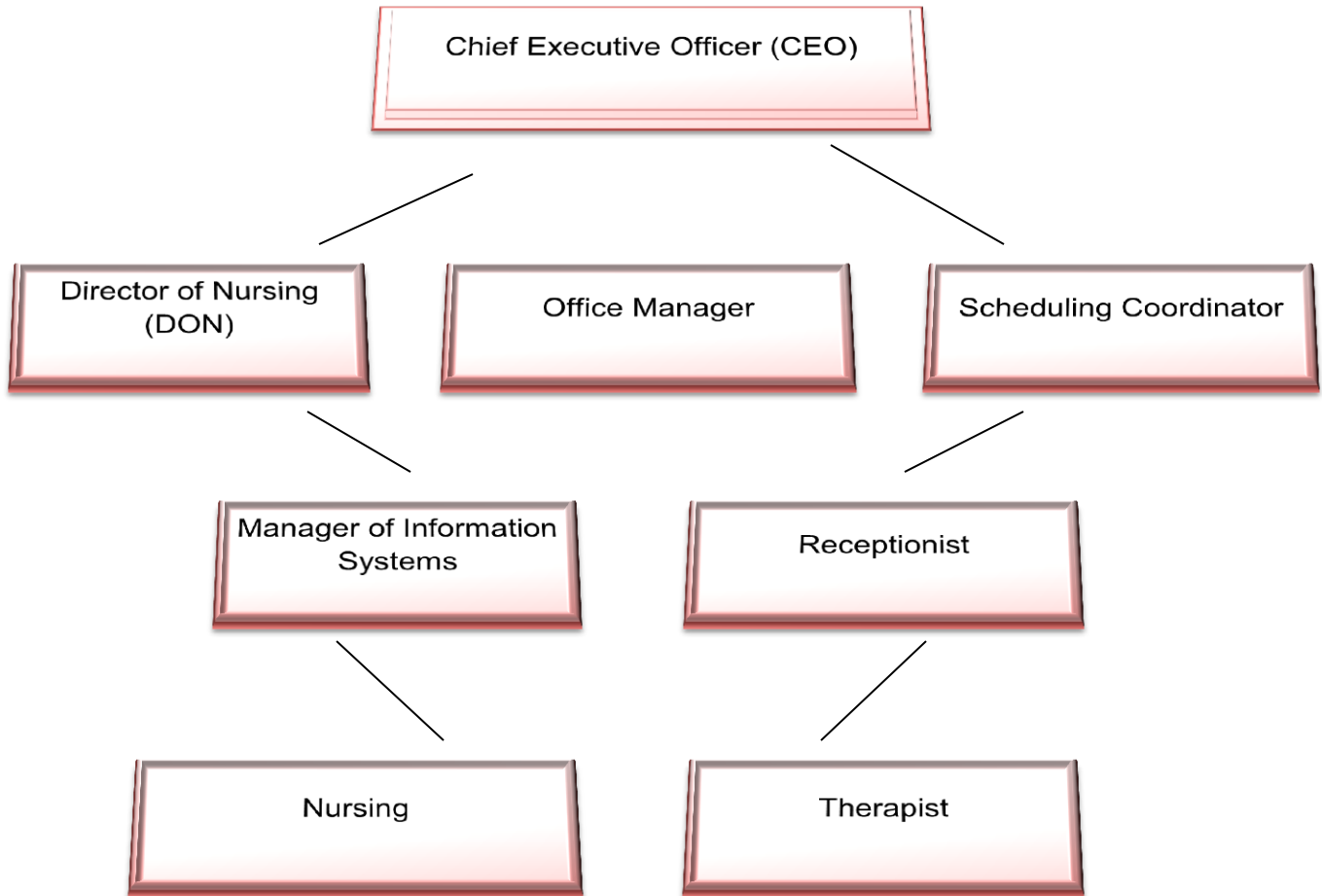
<b>Program Goal</b>	<b>Target Outcome</b>	<b>Steps to Achieve Outcome</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Analysis/Action Plan</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Trainees will demonstrate competencies as measured by program goals	90% of evaluation tool ratings rated as either very satisfied or satisfied	Refresher course to be offered by Technical Support Team 30 days following initial training	100% favorable rating	None at this time	Company CEO	60 days

**Helping Hands Homecare Agency  
Communication Program Evaluation Questionnaire**

1. Are you satisfied with the knowledge gained from this program?  
Very satisfied    Satisfied    Neutral    Dissatisfied    Very dissatisfied
2. How do you feel about the information you receive?  
Very satisfied    Satisfied    Neutral    Dissatisfied    Very dissatisfied
3. You understand the reasons why it is important to communicate with your co-workers.  
Strongly agree    Strongly agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree
4. You understand how to find common ground with clients, supervisors and co-workers.  
Strongly agree    Strongly agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree
5. You understand how to effectively negotiate goals with others.  
Strongly agree    Strongly agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree
6. The information you received contribute to achieving personal and professional goals.  
Strongly agree    Strongly agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree
7. I can apply the information received to your practice.  
Strongly agree    Strongly agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree
8. Teaching methods were appropriate for subject matter.  
Strongly agree    Strongly agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree
9. Do you have any suggestions for the company to help improve performance and efficiency?

10. What other topics do you feel are important for you to know more about and would like the company to include in future communications programs sessions?

## Helping Hands Health Service Organizational Chart



### Reference

National Training and Education Division of FEMA. (2011, November 7). Course development and review process. Retrieved from <https://www.firstrespondertraining.gov/rtdc/state/>