Department:

Health Science

Course Description:

This course is designed to prepare individuals to become paid nutrition assistants in an adult care home. These individuals provide assistance with eating to residents identified by the supervisory nurse, those without complicated feeding problems. Nutrition assistants provide services under the direct supervision of a licensed nurse on duty in the adult care home.

Course Competencies:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to...

1. Describe what it means to work in a long-term care home
2. Discuss what constitutes a safe dining experience
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamentals of good nutrition

Course Content:

A. Working in a long-term care home
   1. Brief overview of long-term care environment
   2. Role and responsibilities of a nutrition assistant
      a. Defined by federal and state laws
      b. Nutrition assistant must be supervised by a licensed nurse
      c. Nutrition assistant receives from the supervising nurse an assignment of residents to assist with eating
      d. Nutrition assistant is responsible for reporting to licensed nurse whenever observable changes occur in the resident
      e. Nutrition assistant provides only the direct care of assisting the resident to eat
      f. Nutrition assistant may push a wheelchair but cannot perform tasks that are considered direct care
      g. Nutrition assistant may perform tasks related to housekeeping and dietary services, if properly trained
      h. Nutrition assistant explains refusal respectfully to resident or family members when requested to provide assistance outside the role
   3. As a member of a team caring for a group of residents, a nutrition assistant:
      a. Performs only the tasks assigned by the licensed nurse
      b. Must be willing to assist other members of the team, within the nutrition assistant’s role and as agreed to by the nurse
      c. Works cooperatively with other members of the team
d. Must be assertive and respectful when requested to provide assistance outside of role

4. In order to create home in a facility, a nutrition assistant should:
   a. Sit beside the resident when providing assistance
   b. Call the resident by his/her preferred name
   c. Speak directly to the resident and other residents at the table about appropriate topics.
   d. Not ask questions that require the resident to talk while he/she is trying to manage eating
   e. Avoid talking about personal issues with other staff while assisting residents to eat.

5. Resident Rights
   a. Dignity
   b. Privacy
   c. Choice
   d. Refusal of food
   e. Confidentiality

6. Residents with special needs
   a. Behavioral symptoms
   b. Adaptive equipment
   c. Visual deficits
   d. Proper use/care of eyeglasses during feeding
   e. Ask nurse/nurse aid to assist in placing hearing aid
   f. Ask nurse/nurse aid to place dentures; notify if chewing difficulty with dentures in place
   g. Examples of special techniques to assist with feeding

7. Positioning during meals
   a. Sitting erect in chair
   b. Head positioned slightly forward
   c. If in bed, maximum upright posture supported by pillows
   d. Ask nurse/nurse aid to reposition resident if necessary

B. A safe dining experience

1. Prevention of infection
   a. Call supervising nurse when ill
   b. Wash hands before assisting resident to eat
   c. Do not blow on food
   d. Ask nurse/nurse aide to clean resident’s hands, etc., if needed
   e. Observe for adequate chewing and swallowing
   f. Ensure resident is swallowing before giving more food

2. Food Safety
   a. Residents are susceptible to food borne illness
   b. Discuss proper methods of food handling and serving
   c. Good hand washing is primary way to prevent infection
   d. Be aware of temperature of food
e. If in doubt about food temperature, ask dietary for assistance

3. Responding to emergencies
   a. Use Heimlich maneuver for choking
   b. Aspiration: stop assisting to eat and get help
   c. Coughing: stop assisting to eat and get help
   d. Vomiting: stop assisting to eat and get help; clean area promptly
   e. Burns: stop assisting to eat and get help

C. Fundamentals of good nutrition
   1. Current dietary guidelines for Americans
   2. Hydration
      a. Offer resident drink of water or other fluid to moisten mouth before offering solid food
      b. Be aware of resident’s preferences
   3. Factors affecting nutritional states
      a. Loss of appetite or alteration of taste due to medications
      b. Poorly fitting dentures
      c. Food does not taste good; altered taste perception
      d. Diseases causing loss of appetite and diseases causing increased calorie expenditure
      e. Visual and sensory changes
   4. Modified diet
      a. Examples of pureed foods, thickened liquids; the nutrition assistant should not assist residents who receive these foods
      b. Check foods received with planned menu
      c. Ask the nurse before giving substitutes
   5. Documentation
      a. Fluid intake, how to measure
      b. Food intake
      c. Notify nurse if the resident’s intake is less than usual

Learning Assessments:

Pre- and post-written exams will be used to evaluate student knowledge. To successfully complete the course, the student must pass the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) competency test (practical skills).

Instructional Materials:


Textbook and other resources yet to be determined.
Guidelines for Requesting Accommodations Based on Documented Disability or Medical Condition

It is the intention of Highland Community College to work toward full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, to make instructional programs accessible to all people, and to provide reasonable accommodations according to the law.

Students should understand that it is their responsibility to self-identify their need(s) for accommodation and that they must provide current, comprehensive diagnosis of a specific disability or medical condition from a qualified professional in order to receive services. Documentation must include specific recommendations for accommodation(s). Documentation should be provided in a timely manner prior to or early in the semester so that the requested accommodation can be considered and, if warranted, arranged.

On-Campus Students: At enrollment, any on campus student may complete a form that will allow them to self-identify any disability.

Off-Campus Regional Students: Self-identify your disability and accommodation needs with the Regional Coordinator and/or instructor, preferably prior to the first class meeting.

Online Students: Self-identify your disability and accommodation needs by contacting the Disabilities Coordinator. Students must provide their own programs to allow accessibility on their home computer.

Any student may also identify their disability by completing an online form located on the HCC homepage under Students Services/Resources/Disabilities. Questions should be directed to the Disabilities Coordinator.