

## **Population Specific Care - Adult**

### **Lesson 1: Introduction**

At the completion of this course, you will be able to:

Describe the stages of growth and development for the young, middle, and older adult and use this information to provide population specific care.

As a healthcare provider you must give care that is appropriate for the population in which you serve. To do this, you must be aware of the stages of growth and development and have the knowledge, abilities, and skills needed to assess, plan, and evaluate care.

Age-specific groups have been created to provide practice guidelines for giving care to individuals across the lifespan. These guidelines assist in care planning, discharge planning and education. Be advised, however, that the growth and development of a person can be different than others in their age group. In addition, literature varies regarding where each age group begins and ends.

### **Lesson 2: Young - Middle Adult**

As you care for an individual you should determine their physical, physiological, cognitive and psychosocial state, in addition to their moral and spiritual needs.

#### *The Young Adult*

The young adult stage extends from 20 to 40 years of age. Physical growth and development peaks in the middle 20s. The young adult develops a personal lifestyle and demonstrates emotional, social and economic responsibility for their life. Their behavior is guided by values and they continue to develop spiritually. Many young adults establish a relationship with a significant other and a commitment to something.

#### *The Middle Adult*

The middle adult stage extends from 40 to 65 years of age. Midlife adults may experience physical changes due to aging or lifestyle changes due to events such as children leaving home. Adults in midlife must balance the needs of many, including their own parents and children.

### **Lesson 3: Care Guidelines: Young - Middle Adult**

When caring for a young or middle adult you should:

- Allow for participation in care and decision making;
- Prepare the adult for interventions and procedures using understandable explanations;
- Identify normal and abnormal assessment data and modify care as needed;
- Modify diagnostic and therapeutic interventions as needed;
- Use appropriate equipment;

Evaluate the adult's lifestyle and assist with necessary adjustments related to health;  
Evaluate other responsibilities and commitments in the adult's life;  
Assist in planning for anticipated changes; and  
Assess educational needs and provide appropriate referrals and resources.

#### **Lesson 4: The Older Adult (or The Elderly)**

The elder population is steadily growing and may outnumber young people by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The young-old stage extends from 65 to 74 years of age. The young-old adult may experience retirement, changing physical abilities and chronic illnesses. The middle-old stage extends from 75 to 84 years of age. The middle-old adult may experience a decline in their speed of movement and reaction time. They may also become more dependent on others. The old-old stage extends from 85 years of age. During this stage the old-old adult may experience more physical problems.

#### **Lesson 5: Care Guidelines: The Older Adult**

When caring for an older adult you should:

- Allow for participation in care and decision making. You may also need to include other individuals as designated;
- Prepare the older adult for interventions and procedures using understandable explanations;
- Identify normal and abnormal assessment data, such as the effects of aging on functional ability and visual and auditory acuity, and modify care as needed;

Modify diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, including medications, as needed;  
Use appropriate equipment;  
Encourage the older adult to keep physically and socially active and to maintain peer group interactions when able;  
Evaluate the adult's ability to cope with loss and assist as needed;  
Assist with self-care as required but allow as much independence as possible;  
Provide safety measures to prevent skin breakdown, falls, etc.; and  
Assess educational needs and provide appropriate referrals and resources.

It is important for healthcare providers to be aware of their own attitudes toward aging and the elderly to avoid ageism.

### **Lesson 6: Conclusion**

Following these guidelines will help you provide the best care possible. If you have any questions regarding population specific care, contact the appropriate personnel within your organization.