

Delegation and Technician Training

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Learning Objectives

- Describe how well-trained pharmacy technicians can enable pharmacists to provide more patient-focused pharmacy services
- Describe various methods of training pharmacy technicians
- Design the steps necessary to establish an on-the-job training program for pharmacy technicians

Learning Objectives

- List the technician duties that should be included in a pharmacy technician training program
- Develop strategies for decreasing turnover among pharmacy technicians
- Delegate routine, non-judgmental dispensing functions to pharmacy technicians.

Delegation and Technician Training

Part 1: Technician Training

Background

- Current pharmacy situation
 - Working harder
 - Expected to be more productive
 - Expected to provide more pharmacist care services

Example: Veteran's Administration

“Veteran's Administration hospitals...[are] using technicians to handle virtually all of the operation-distribution types of activity.”

Office of Inspector General

“An economic barrier that affects the overall cost of pharmacy services is the uneven use of pharmacy technicians in community settings.”

Office of Inspector General

“Defining the role of the pharmacist as a clinical provider and standardizing pharmacist care functions should dilute the fear that technicians would replace pharmacists rather than supplement the services they provide.”

Key Terms

“Pharmacy supportive personnel”

vs.

“Pharmacy technician”

Key Terms

“Training”

vs.

“Education”

Key Terms

“Certification”

“Accreditation”

“Registration”

“Licensure”

State Board Requirements

	# of states	Training required	CE required
Registration	24	14	3
Licensure	4	3	4
Certification	2	2	2

Types of Training

1. Employer-sponsored
2. Free-standing non-degree programs
3. Military training programs
4. Degree programs
5. Certification

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Addressing Technician Turnover

- Good technicians are hard to replace
- Replacing technicians is expensive, disruptive and time-consuming

Reasons for Turnover

- Poor personnel management skills
 - Poor interviewing skills
 - Insufficient support or training

Reasons for Turnover

- Low status
- Low wages
- High stress
- No perceptible career ladder

Low Wages May Be Counterproductive

A pharmacy's least-skilled technician is the pharmacy's most expensive one, regardless of his or her salary.

Technician Career Ladder

- Based on productivity
- Designations
 - Technician Trainee
 - Technician I
 - Technician II
 - Head Technician
 - Technician Trainer
 - Third-Party Technician

Senior Technician Responsibilities

- Training other technicians
- Supervising scheduling
- Control inventory
- Handle third-party problems

Personnel Management Tools

1. Personnel handbook
2. Policy and procedures manual
3. Job description
4. Performance appraisal
5. Orientation program for new hires
6. Training manual

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Steps in the Training Process

1. Interviewing candidates
2. Conducting an orientation program
3. Conducting on-the-job training
4. Assessing trainees and training program

Interviewing Candidates: Employment Application

- Personal data
- Work experience
- Salary information
- Personal references

Interviewing Candidates: Conducting Interviews

- Let candidate know agenda
- Put candidates at ease
- Ask questions about any concerns regarding the application
- Ask candidate to describe interest in the position

Interviewing Candidates: Interview Questions

- Types
 - Job knowledge
 - Job requirements
 - Situational questions
 - Behavioral questions
- Open-ended
- Same for each candidate

Interviewing Candidates: Duties

Explain duties as honestly as possible

Interviewing Candidates: Assessing Attributes

- Verbal expression
- Motivation/job interest
- Appearance
- Maturity

Interviewing Candidates: Assessing Attributes

- Tact
- Self confidence
- Honesty, sincerity, and candor
- Previous experience
- Ability of the candidate to self evaluate

Interviewing Candidates: Aptitude Tests

- Must be relevant to the job
- Examples:
 - Mathematics
 - Keyboarding
 - Medical terminology

Interviewing Candidates: References

- Previous employers
- Current employers

Orientation Program: Benefits

- Establishes expectations
- Demonstrates trust
- Sets tone
- Encourages open communication
- Encourages group cohesiveness
- Can shorten training time
- Produces happier and more confident workers

Orientation Program: Designing

- Specified period of time
- During work hours
- Outside of work hours

Orientation Program: First Day

- Salary and hours
- Job description
- Performance appraisals
- Confidentiality
- Tour of facility
- Important policies

Orientation Program: Outside of Work

- Information to be read at home
 - Personnel handbook
 - Policy and procedures manual
- Points to discuss

On-the-Job Training: Method

- Direct supervision
- Observing
- Trainer as role model

On-the-Job Training: Goals and Assessment

- Have clear training program outcomes
- Make use of other personnel management tools
 - Set learning objectives
 - Assess post training
 - Deficiencies determine goals for improvement

On-the-Job Training: Advantages

- Apply new skills immediately
- Prompt feedback

On-the-Job Training: Disadvantages

- Number of trainees
- Consequences of error
- Quality of trainer

On-the-Job Training: Minimizing Disadvantages

- Training should be as complete and systematic as possible.
- Use “Job Instruction Training” (JIT)

Job Instruction Training

1. Careful selection of trainer and trainee
2. Full explanation and demonstration
3. Trial performance
4. Thorough feedback

Selection of the Trainer

- Manager
- Experienced technician
 - Type of person to select
 - Role of the manager

Training Sequence

- Trainer should review materials
- Break training program into small modules
- Assess proficiency of each module before proceeding
- Sequence of topics is important

Training Should Be Customized

“...state boards of pharmacy [should] require initial and on-going training that is site-specific.”

- NABP Resolution, 1995

Rewards for Success

- Trainee
- Trainer

Assessment of Trainees and Training Programs

- Importance
- Methods
 - Feedback session
 - Demonstrate abilities and skills
 - Basis for accepting new responsibilities
 - Basis for future training

Testing Knowledge

- Quiz
 - Interpreting prescriptions
 - Locating and identifying uses for OTCs
 - Understanding pharmacy laws
- Demonstrate skills

Other Uses of Assessment

- Modify future orientation and training programs
- Solicit suggestions for improvement

Technician Duties

1. General Duties
2. Prescription medications
3. Prescriptions
4. Patient interaction
5. The dispensing process
6. Third-party prescriptions
7. Non-dispensing duties

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Other Technician Duties

8. Alternative drug distribution systems
9. Sterile product compounding

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Cross-Training Programs

- After training for a specific job
- Staff flexibility

Cross-Training: Benefits

- Increase productivity
- Encourage cooperation
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Understand how different jobs

Cross-Training: Benefits

- Improved work quality
- Employer flexibility
- Greater job satisfaction
- Opportunity for advancement

Cross-Training: Method

Informal “buddy system”

Cross-Training: Potential Pitfalls

- Low job security
- Employee not suited for tasks
- Inability of employee to train others

Cross-Training: Solutions to Pitfalls

- Trust and open discussion
- Make participation voluntary
- Select trainers carefully and reward success

Cross-Training: Cost vs. Benefits

- Direct costs
- Indirect costs
- Cost = investment in productivity

Delegation and Technician Training

Part 2: Delegation

Definition of Delegation

“To entrust (authority, power, etc.) to a person acting as one=s representative”

- *Webster’s New World Dictionary 2nd Ed.*

Benefits of Delegation

- To managers
- To employees
- To the organization

Importance of Delegation

- Necessary to get work done
- Employees need responsibility
- Employees need to feel good about their contributions

Delegation: Key Concepts

- Responsibility
- Authority

How to Delegate

1. Focus on outcomes
2. Assess employee's capabilities
3. Make sure task is important or necessary
4. Explain the task in understandable terms
5. Prioritize
6. Provide the necessary resources
 - Time
 - Space
 - Money

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7. Provide necessary authority
8. Delegate the entire task
9. Explain the reasons
10. Provide advice if needed
11. Provide accountability and autonomy
12. Obtain acceptance
13. Explain benefits/rewards
14. Follow up with performance evaluation
15. Give credit or take blame

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Do Not Delegate

- Policy making
- Specific personnel matters
- Confidential matters
- Delegation itself

Delegation Pitfall

Don't over-delegate

Excuses for Not Delegating

1. “I can do it better myself”
2. “We can’t afford mistakes”
3. “It has to be done now”
4. “I enjoy doing this work”

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6. “Employees will think I’m too bossy”
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Overcoming Reluctance

- Managers / Pharmacists
- Subordinates

Results of Delegation

- Meets employees' needs
- Improves productivity
- Improves job satisfaction