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

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th># of states</th>
<th>Training required</th>
<th>CE required</th>
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<td>Registration</td>
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<td>Certification</td>
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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
Other Technician Duties

8. Alternative drug distribution systems
9. Sterile product compounding
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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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