

9: MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS AND MALINGERING

Time:	30 min.
Format:	Lecture, discussion
Materials:	PowerPoint, Handout: "Common Medications and Side Effects," flip chart and markers
Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize common side effects of medications used to treat mental disorders.• Describe prevalence and motivations for malingering.• Understand the rights of people with mental disorders to treatment and to self-determination, as balanced with the safety needs of the individual and others.

Description

This module will orient participants to common psychotropic medications and their side effects while touching on the right of individuals with mental health disorder to make choices about their medical care.

Before Training

Print enough copies of the handout "Common Medications and Side Effects" for each participant to have one.

During Training



Concerns about Malingering

Set Up

Say:

Malingering is a behavior that you are likely to come in contact with in a correctional facility. Malingering is pretending or exaggerating illness or injury. People may malingering for different reasons like to avoid being bothered or to avoid work. In a correctional facility, malingering is sometimes used as a survival strategy that the person may have learned, so the main motivation might not be simply trying to deceive a CO.



But people with mental illness may **appear to be pretending** to be unable to perform their tasks **when they truly are not able**.

How can you begin to determine that someone may be suffering from a mental disorder instead of malingering? Foremost, that's not the job of the CO; it's the job of mental health staff, so always be sure to follow standard procedure for referrals to medical or mental health care.

But beyond that, knowing the individual's habits can be helpful in understanding behavior on a daily basis. If a person is usually attentive and on track, but they have changed and are unresponsive or difficult, they may be more likely to have a mental health concern.

Mental illness often compromises choice for an incarcerated person. If a person has major depression, then getting out of bed may seem impossible to them, not a choice to disturb the daily routine.

Discussion

Facilitate the discussion with the following questions:

- How do you respond to someone who you think may be malingering at your workplace?
- Would you change your response if you knew someone who appeared to be malingering was diagnosed with a mental illness that impeded their ability to control their behavior?
- How might you respond differently? Does your facility have a policy that you would follow?

Transition by saying:

When someone has a mental disorder, appropriate medication may help a person function better. However, medications can have side effects that may alter a person's behavior.

Medication

Set Up

Introduce this topic by saying:

Medication is often used for mental disorders that disrupt a person's life. You may not know what medication someone is taking, but a general awareness of common issues medication might cause can be helpful.



Let's briefly look at a list of common medications and their side effects. You can keep this handout to refer to whenever needed on the job.

Refer participants to the handout "Common Medications and Side Effects."

Discussion

Review the contents of the handout "Common Medications and Side Effects."

Ask:

- How many of these side effects could look like malingering?
- Do you feel qualified to be able to tell when someone is suffering side effects? (Hint: they shouldn't!)
- If you aren't a qualified mental health professional, who at your workplace would you share your concerns about someone's behavior with? (Hint: supervisor, mental health staff. It may differ according to workplace. Emphasize that if they're unsure, then they should ask as soon as they return to work.)

Conclude by saying:

Unless you're a mental health professional, it's not your job to diagnose an incarcerated person. But recognizing that someone may be unable to respond effectively due to mental illness can make a safer facility for everyone and an easier life for correctional officers.

Transition by saying:

Further, people with mental disorders maintain the right to treatment even while incarcerated.

Individual Rights and the Right to Make Choices about Medical Care

Lecture

Present lecture:

Incarcerated people with mental illness may be compromised in their ability to make rational choices while incarcerated.

However, they still maintain their rights.

One right is to proper treatment. Treatment may even restore and improve a person's ability to make choices.

Your job as a correctional officer is to make sure the incarcerated person has access to treatment, which means you must follow your institution's policies on reporting concerns about mental health.

Conclude module:

Unless you are trained and qualified, your job is not to be a doctor or a therapist. However, some basic knowledge of what to look for and how to respond can keep your workplace safer and maintain the rights of any incarcerated people with mental disorders.

You can refer to the resources from this training on the website any time in the future. You should also talk with your supervisor and/or your workplace's mental health specialists for any special details on workplace procedures or about any people you are concerned about.

Being proactive and observant benefits everyone.



SOURCES

Module 9

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