

The Essential Need for Therapy in the SNF

Now more than ever, clinicians should make every effort to assist facilities in addressing patient care needs by reviewing current plans of care to ensure *function* is at the core of the goals outlined.

During this unprecedented pandemic, it is important Reliant therapists partner with our facilities to serve our particularly vulnerable population. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security defines physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech language pathologists as essential healthcare providers.

Individualized plans of care should employ therapeutic tasks that will target functional interventions to aid in reducing the care burden that daily tasks place on support personnel. Therapists can have a positive community impact that assists in addressing ongoing COVID-19 needs such as:

- Improved patient psycho-social and emotional well-being,
- Preventing unnecessary declines in condition,
- Reduced re-hospitalizations, and
- Safe and successful discharge home.

Following are a few discipline-specific clinical considerations which incorporate skill as well as practical, functional tasks relative to daily patient care:

Physical Therapy:

- Increase mobility and balance tasks in the patient's room during dressing, toileting, or other activities.
- Preservation of skin integrity by assessing positioning needs for bed bound patients throughout the day.
- Target bed to chair transfers in order to aid in morning or evening routines.
- Integrate routine vital signs, orthostatic blood pressure readings, into session and report to nursing.

Occupational Therapy:

- Perform dressing and grooming tasks to complete morning or evening self-care routines.
- Target self-feeding during meal times with patients that require assistance.
- Incorporate toilet training throughout the day for high fall risk patients.
- Partner with activities to identify healthy leisure activities and coping strategies.

Speech Therapy:

- Incorporate use of video chatting with friends or family for patients with communication or cognitivelinguistic deficits.
- Address dysphagia goals during meal times for at risk residents.
- Target problem solving, reasoning, memory, and/or sequencing during morning or evening self-care routines.
- Address call light use and needs by engaging safety and problem solving tasks.

SUMMARY

As facilities implement proactive strategies to reduce transmission risk, therapy should adapt service delivery techniques to mitigate unintended consequences such as social isolation and reduced mobility.

The challenges therapy teams face in the adaptation of service delivery is met by the opportunity to create person-centered, specialized clinical care environments which emulate Reliant's motto of **Care Matters.**



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