



## Nightingale Care Home Health Aide List of Dos and Don'ts

Here is a list of things you should do when you're caring for your home health aide clients.

### **1. Report all changes in your patient's health status to the nurse and your agency**

When working with a client, you'll have information about their underlying health conditions and what sort of symptoms they can typically expect to experience on a regular basis. And as you spend time with them, you'll also develop a sense of what falls within the range of normal for your client.

If, at any point, you notice something with your client's health that is even slightly out of the ordinary, you must immediately notify the agency and in many cases, the client's healthcare provider. Something that may not seem like a big deal on the surface could be a warning sign for a significant health issue.

To make sure things go smoothly in such an event, you must keep your client's medical provider's contact information readily available. In most cases, it will turn out to be nothing major, but it is better to be safe than sorry.

### **2. Ask someone if you have a question regarding your patient**

When you first start working with your client, you will be briefed on their medical conditions, as well as their needs and preferences when it comes to daily activities, recreation, or anything else that is relevant within your client/aide worker relationship.

But as you go along, you may find that you have more questions, especially in the beginning stages. And when you do have questions, you shouldn't hesitate to ask. You can ask your client, their family members, or their healthcare providers.

Clarifying any doubts will ensure that you're able to provide the best care for your client and that your working relationship will continue thriving as you move forward.

### **3. Follow your patient's care plan**

This one should go without saying. You must strictly adhere to your patient's care plan, whether it's assistance with daily activities, reminding to take medication, or anything else that is a part of their care plan. It is also important not to do things that are not on care plan.

You should get a clear idea of your patient's care plan during the training phase or as you get familiar with your patient. But, you may find that you need more information when you start caring for your client, and you shouldn't hesitate to ask questions.

#### **4. Call the agency if you are unsure about anything**

Depending on the specific situation, the client or their family members may not have all the answers.

In such cases, you should contact the Agency if you're unsure about anything. Your agency is ultimately responsible for the care that you provide, and when in doubt, it is best to check with them to see what they recommend.

Again, this type of situation is more likely to occur at the beginning of your relationship with your client. As you get more familiar with your client and the required tasks, you will eventually get to a point where you will have very few questions.

#### **5. Get to work on time and accurately document your time**

One aspect of being reliable and trustworthy is to be consistent. That means consistently showing up to work at the right time. If you're caring for someone that relies on you for meals, dressing, bathing, etc., not showing up on time can disrupt their schedule and add to their distress.

Of course, there may be circumstances out of your control that cause you to be late, like traffic, or a family situation of your own.

In such events, a little communication will go a long way. Call your client and let them know that you'll be late, so they know what to expect, and they can plan accordingly.

And of course, it goes without saying that you should accurately document your time for each client that you work with.

#### **6. Follow your agencies' rules regarding dress code and conduct**

As you continue to work with your clients, you'll hopefully get to know them better, and you'll both become more comfortable around each other.

Getting closer to your clients is a very positive thing. If your client feels a connection with you, it will improve your caregiving relationship, and also provide emotional support for your client who might otherwise feel isolated due to their disability.

And as you and your client get more comfortable with each other, it may be tempting to relax your level of professionalism around them.

But you must stick to your agencies' rules regarding conduct and dress code. You must remember that you're still providing a service and that your clients deserve the highest standards when it comes to how you conduct yourself around them during work.

### **7. Make sure to keep your physical and in-services up to date**

You must make sure to keep all of your training up to date, including your in-services. There might be requirements that aides complete a certain number of in-service training each year for your agency to be eligible for reimbursement through Medicare.

Check with your agency for details on your specific training requirements, and then be proactive about keeping your training up-to-date.

You might also have to go through a physical examination periodically.

All of this is to ensure that your client stays safe and that they get the highest standard of care that is in line with the latest regulations and requirements.

## **Home Health Aide List of Don'ts**

Providing the best care to your client isn't only about what you do. It's also about what you don't do. Let's take a look at the list of don'ts when it comes to your work as a home health aide.

### **1. Never treat your patients roughly**

It is never, under any circumstance, acceptable that you treat your clients unprofessionally or in a rough manner. There might be times when you have to be firm with your client, especially if they are unwilling to do something that is a necessary part of their care plan.

But you must do so with kindness and empathy, just like you would treat a family member. Your client's family has trusted you with the wellbeing of their loved one, and you must, at all times, adhere to treating respect, kindness, and dignity.

### **2. Never smoke in the patient's home**

If you need to smoke, you should do so outside your client's home during designated breaks.

If you're caring for an elderly client, they might have lung health issues like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which could be exasperated through second-hand smoke. The last thing you want is for your client to experience shortness of breath because you were smoking in their vicinity.

Even in the absence of a lung condition, and even if your client says that you can smoke in their home, it is unprofessional and may reflect poorly on you and your agency.

Your client may also find it unpleasant if you smell of cigarettes when you're caring for them. To avoid any problems, you should talk to your agency if you smoke, and ask them to match you with clients who don't have a problem with it.

### **3. Avoid creating conflict in the workplace**

One of your responsibilities as a home health aide is to make your client feel comfortable with you and the care that you're providing. And creating a harmonious environment is a part of that.

If you have issues that need to be resolved, whether it's with your client, their family members, doctors, or anyone else involved in the process, do it through open, honest, and professional communication.

Remember that it is not about you, or anyone else, besides your client and their wellbeing. And everything you do, from providing care to communicating with those involved in the process, is only to improve your client's quality of life.

If you find that you're unable to resolve a conflict through proper methods, bring it up with your agency and follow their advice.

### **4. Don't use profanity when caring for your client**

This goes along with the previous point about maintaining professionalism around your client in the place of work.

Even when you get to a point where you become friendly with your client, you should still treat them with respect, dignity, and as a paying customer. That includes not using unprofessional language in front of them, along with other things like dressing correctly, not smoking, etc.

### **5. Avoid wearing perfume and dangling jewelry**

You should take your personal hygiene very seriously when working with your client. But it might be best to avoid wearing perfume, especially if it has a strong smell.

If your client is sensitive to the smell of your perfume, it could be unpleasant for them when they spend time with you in close proximity.

The same goes for any large, dangling jewelry, which can get in your client's way when you're caring for them.

If you do have jewelry that you wear for religious reasons, you can hide them under your clothes for the period when you're working with your client.

### **6. Don't borrow or accept any money from your client or their family members**

All financial transactions with your client need to be handled by your agency, whether that's working with Medicare, your client's insurance, or coordinating with healthcare providers.

To avoid complications, refrain from accepting any money directly from your client or any of their family members. And definitely do not ask to borrow money from your client under any circumstances. It is unprofessional and will create doubts about you and your agency.

If you have any concerns about your compensation or hours, you should bring that up with your agency instead.

### **7. Don't discuss your client's medical conditions**

You should never discuss your client's medical condition with anyone other than the people that are directly involved in the care process. That includes your client, their family members, healthcare providers like nurses and doctors, and your supervisor.

Besides that, you shouldn't discuss your client's details with your other colleagues, or with anyone outside of work.

Your agency and your client is trusting you with sensitive information, and if you share it with people you're not supposed to, it could create irreparable damage to the trust between you, your client, and your agency.

### **8. Don't discuss your own medical conditions or family situation with your clients.**

### **Final thoughts on dos and don'ts as a home health aide (HHA):**

As a home health aide, what you do is vital to the wellbeing of your client. You also provide mental peace and security to the client's family members because they know that their loved ones are in trusted hands.

Hopefully, this list has provided clarity about the things that you should and shouldn't do when it comes to providing care. Following the best practices guidelines will make sure your clients get the best care, and it will strengthen the relationship with you/your agency.

And remember, when in doubt, you can always ask for more information to clarify anything regarding your client's care protocol. You can ask your clients directly, their family members, healthcare providers, and, if necessary, your home care agency.

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