

March 6, 2015

KHRS Fast Facts Friday



Social Work Month – March 2015

The following information may or may not be appropriate to your clinical setting. Please review the information and determine the appropriateness of the content prior to sharing with your staff.

Eligible for LMS Credit: Yes



The first social work class was offered at Columbia University the summer of 1898. Over 100 years later, our profession continues to be strong affecting changes for the better in matters of civil rights, and working towards the creation of benefits such as unemployment insurance, disability pay, Medicare / Medicaid, worker's compensation and social security. In March, we celebrate National Social Work Month and as we highlight those social work professionals in our buildings, we thought it would be a great time to look at their role within our hospital's interdisciplinary teams.

The World Health Organization stated in 2010 that "It is no longer enough for health workers to be professional. In the current global climate, health workers also need to be interprofessional." An interdisciplinary team is different than a multidisciplinary team in that decisions regarding patient care are made as a collective professional group, rather than by a single profession. I've worked with physicians, physical/occupational/speech therapists, nurses, pharmacists, infection control practitioners, various other interdisciplinary team members and family members and never thought about our role until I was asked one day, what does a social worker do? There is no better example of the social worker's role in an interprofessional team than our interdisciplinary team (IDT) meetings and within our case management departments. By helping to identify the true reason of why someone is suddenly unable to return home by recognizing the fears of patients and their families and the barriers generated by lack of resources, social workers are often able to formulate plans as a member of the interdisciplinary team to achieve a successful discharge to home.

The National Association of Social Workers possibly described the profession most eloquently as, "Social Work is the Profession of Hope – fueled by resilience and advocacy. Social workers matter because they help millions of struggling people every day dream differently". These professionals look beyond the fears of a new illness and new limitations to the possibilities and abilities of a new tomorrow. They tap into, or in some cases, create resources for our patients and families in order to help them achieve their ultimate goal of returning home. Nora O'Brien-Suric noted in Health AGenda on March 28, 2013 that, "In the United States, more than 650,000 of these highly trained professionals know how daunting and immobilizing life's tragedies and obstacles can be. But they also witness the sheer determination of countless individuals and families to achieve different lives. Sometimes, all it takes to help people get on the right path is guidance toward what is possible. Other times, social workers are an immediate lifeline in crisis-providing access to resources and new life options."

Please take some time this month to show your appreciation to the Social Workers and Case Managers in all of our facilities. Collaboratively we all support efforts to help our patients achieve their dreams of returning home.

- FFF written by: Crystal Dubose, Senior Director of Case Management