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Why Certify?

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The National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners was formed to promote standards of excellence in dementia education to professionals and other caregivers who provide direct care services to dementia clients. As the number of dementia cases continues to increase nationally and worldwide, there is an even greater necessity to ensure that caregivers are well trained to provide appropriate, competent and sensitive direct care and support for the dementia patient.

The National Academy of Sciences reports that as America approaches unparalleled demands for services in its elderly population, health care workers' needs will greatly impact the care of people with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Essentially, we must take care of the caregiver. Health care workers must be prepared with the tools and knowledge required to manage the growing dementia population during the next 60+ years.

Currently, each state in the U.S. has varying requirements for dementia training in long-term care facilities. This leads to inconsistencies in training, techniques,

skill, information, and, in unfortunate cases, can lead to misunderstanding and abuse of the dementia patient.

The NCCDP sponsors the Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP®), which is the earned credential that recognizes the highest standards in Alzheimer's and dementia education.

CDP certification provides recognition and indicates competency and a commitment in the area of Alzheimer's and dementia care.

THE PROCESS

The process begins with the completion of the NCCDP Alzheimer's and Dementia Care seven-hour training that is taught by a NCCDP certified instructor.

Students receive comprehensive resources that include key aspects of dementia care such as diagnosis, prognosis and treatment, communication techniques, disruptive behaviors interventions, and tools for addressing concerns such as wandering, aggressive behaviors, poor nutrition and sexuality.

The student must then go through the application process for certification. Once awarded with the credential, certification must be renewed bi-annually with proof of continuing education that is dementia specific.

BENEFITS

Some of the benefits of becoming a Certified Dementia Practitioner are:

- * enhanced caregiving skills using safe and effective best practices
- * improved patient interventions and outcomes
- * reduced staff turnover due to burnout
- * increased organizational understanding of and sensitivity to the dementia patient
- * evidence of a health care professional's commitment
- * security and comfort for families.

Further, employers recognize the credential and place confidence in those who possess it when evaluating potential new hires and assessing job performance and commitment

The NCCDP also provides Train the Trainer programs for health educators, nurses and consultants, as well as education and certification for Dementia Unit Managers. In addition, the NCCDP sponsors training and certification for first responders who interface with the dementia client in the community.

For more information, go to NCCDP.org.

Lynn Biot-Gordon is Executive Director, NCCDP.

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