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Teaching Skills for Self Sufficiency: Health Management for Patients with Disabilities and Chronic Health Conditions

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Children's Mercy Kansas City

Background

Research shows patients who develop self-health management skills are able to translate these skills in other life domains such as higher education, social interaction and employment. Persons with chronic health conditions or disabilities often face challenges securing employment which in turn impacts self-sufficiency and long-term health.

Objectives: 1. Identify methods of coaching to build self-health management skills

2. Demonstrate successful models of self-management resulting in health care dollar savings

3. Understand the positive impact of employment on long-term health, self-sufficiency and community integration for those with disabilities and chronic health conditions

Children's Mercy has two programs that serve as key building blocks for patients.

Transition to Adulthood Program

During the clinic visit, patients ages 15 and older:

- Complete an annual self-health management readiness survey
- Pick one goal to accomplish in the coming year; and;
- Discuss their knowledge with their health care team.

Staff provide education and support.

- Review the patient's progress from the previous year.
- Discuss the goal patient has chosen for the coming year.
- Two years prior to aging out of pediatric care, begin discussions re: insurance and adult care provider options.
- Coordinate transfer and communicate with new provider.

Results

The Transition Program has provided education and guidance to over 7,000 patients. Project RISE has supported over 1,300 people with disabilities. These interventions create self-confidence, self-awareness and the ability to successfully navigate healthcare systems, education, and the workforce.

The results are improved long-term health and the psychological, social and economic benefits that come with employment. The relationship between health and employment status has been established. Studies with Kansas Medicaid recipients also found lower health care expenditures and higher reported quality of life among individuals who are employed. (Hall, Kurth, & Hunt, 2013).

3 Sentence Summary

Health

1. I am 19 , have spina bifida and a neurogenic bladder.

2. I have to self-catheterize and take Ditropan daily .

3. I am here because I think I have a bladder infection.

Employment

1. I'm a recent college graduate with a degree in accounting.

2. I have worked as a volunteer tutor and did an internship last year.

3. I will need a desk at the right height for my wheelchair.

Project RISE

Reaching for Independent Successful Employment

Patients with disabilities or chronic health conditions, ages 15 and older benefit from:

- Employment resources
- Career planning
- Direct support in a work setting.

Twenty-two young adults are employed at the hospital. Volunteer and internship opportunities help transition-age patients acquire marketable experience.

Career Academy classes help participants explore personal conditions, preferences, contributions and support needs that impact career choices and future self-sufficiency.

Conclusion

The combination of encouraging and guiding adolescents with disabilities and chronic health conditions to manage their health and acquire job-related skills creates confidence, independence and self-sufficiency in adulthood.

Joining health care and employment transition programs translates into the development of critical skills for teens and young adults.

This includes planning and organizational abilities, awareness of personal support needs and the ability to self-advocate through complex systems. This yields long term benefits to our patients.



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