

## OASIS Alert

### Education: THIS WILL BE ON THE TEST

Want your employees to be first-class OASIS masters? The key word is "class."

As thousands of teachers can tell you, people simply pay more attention to what you tell them if they know there will be a test later and home health employees are no exception. One of the best ways to assess how well your agency's employees understand OASIS, as well as to determine how effective your training sessions are, is to give them an actual test.

Many agencies use multiple-choice tests to assess staff members' competency with OASIS, and most HHAs "are happy with the results," reports Chapel Hill, NC-based consultant **Judy Adams** with the **Larson Allen Healthcare Group**. Multiple-choice and/or fill-in-the-blank is definitely the way to go, agrees consultant **Pam Warmack** with **Clinic Connections** in Ruston, LA. That's because tests in that format take far less time to administer and review than tests requiring lots of writing, Warmack points out.

Agencies always should test new nurses as part of their orientation, Warmack and Adams tell **Eli**. Many agencies require new hires to watch a training video on OASIS. Agencies always should follow that video up with a test to assess how much information the employee retained from her training, Warmack insists.

But the new employee should watch the video and take her test only after observing an established nurse complete an OASIS assessment. "There's so much information to retain that just going to the questions themselves and the paperwork isn't as effective as first allowing [the new employee] to ride with a nurse and observe," Warmack explains.

Just make sure you send the newbie out with someone who has proven herself to be good with OASIS, she reminds agencies.

Agencies also should include tests as part of in-services for all employees, Warmack notes. "You should always test after an in-service, just to see how effective your teaching methods are, if nothing else," Warmack says.

Further, having employees show you in black and white what they're taking away from the training session sometimes is the only way to discover if someone is confused. Many people are too shy to ask questions during the training session, but reviewing their test responses will let you know if they've missed something, Warmack relates.

#### Don't Forget About Pre-Tests

While post-tests are an invaluable tool for agencies, administering a pre-test before beginning your in-service can be extremely helpful as well, Warmack continues. "They get the group thinking about the information you're about to present."

Tests are a great way to ensure that clinicians understand areas of OASIS that historically have proven to be confusing, such as wound care and incontinence items, Warmack points out. Also, agencies can use a test to help break up blocks of information that could be overwhelming if taken all at once, Adams adds.

For example, instead of giving a nurse all of Chapter 8 from the OASIS Implementation Manual and asking her to "learn it," just have her review a few of the OASIS items presented in the chapter, and then test her knowledge on that section before moving on to another, Adams explains. People tend to "zone out" if they try to process the entire chapter at once, but bite-sized portions punctuated by follow-up test questions aid the learning process, she notes.

When it comes to actually developing your testing module(s), the QI director, clinical supervisor or in-service coordinator

is a good person for the job, Adams suggests.

Alternatively, a small group of clinicians within your agency could develop your tests in response to their findings from record reviews of problem areas, Adams offers.

And to ensure staff buy-in when it comes to testing, an agency must gain management buy-in as well, Adams counsels. "If management does not see the value and importance of doing OASIS testing, staff will not either."

Editor's Note: See article 3 for sample test questions.