

Decision-Making Capacity (DMC) and APRN Knowledge

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KEEPING THE PROMISE

Introduction

- Decision making capacity assessment is a critical component of informed consent
- Its presence supports decision making, patient autonomy and ensures safety

Objectives

- Assess APRN knowledge
- Provide education to support APRN confidence
- Increase use of a validated assessment tool for documentation (pictured below)

Methods

- APRNs received structured training on when and how to assess DMC, use an assessment tool, and initiate surrogate decision-making when appropriate

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Pre/Post-Test & Interviews measured changes in APRN knowledge and confidence
- 1- and 3-month Post-Implementation surveys evaluated Template use and barriers

Results

Educational intervention:

- 14.7% increase in APRN knowledge of decision-making capacity

APRN Feedback:

- Improved confidence and clarity in practice
- Ongoing or repeated training
- Virtual modules and accessible resources

1- and 3-month follow-ups:

- 15% of providers reported using the new assessment template
- Non-use mostly attributed to:
 - Patients not requiring evaluation
 - Heavy workload
 - Remote work

Recommendations

On-demand learning:

- Include recorded training sessions
- Have recorded sessions available on SharePoint or intranet

Ongoing Updates:

- Regular Fast facts through email
- Brief updates could highlight key information, new resources, or process changes

Mentorship and Peer Support:

- Experienced APRNs assist newer APRN staff to navigate clinical care and educational resources.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning while providing support in the face of reduced staffing and ongoing workflow change

Limitations

- Relatively small sample of APRNs
- Potential distractions during the intervention
- Organizational staffing challenges

References

- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/improvement-hub/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2017/11/Quality-Improvement-Theory-and-Practice-in-Healthcare.pdf>
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mena.2022.01.008>
- <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajr.12592>
- <https://www.mdedge.com/psychiatry/article/62087/your-patient-making-wrong-treatment-choice?sso=true>
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.maturitas.2016.06.01>

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Decision-Making Capacity Assessment Template V1.3

This template will be utilized when a Veteran's decision-making capacity for a specific health care decision, to make a disposition decision, or to name a surrogate is in question. This template will be utilized by the practitioner who will be performing the treatment or procedure.

++ Click here for Federal Regulation and VHA Handbook on Decisional Capacity (Link to [38CFR 17.32](#) regulation and [VHA Handbook 1004.01](#))

++ If the patient has a guardian, stop the assessment due to legal adjudication determining the patient lacks competence, and contact the guardian.

++ A field or option with "*" indicates it is required.

++ First, inform the patient of the purpose of this assessment.

This assessment is evaluating the Patient's capacity to make a specific decision about which of the following?

++ One selection only

- Clinical treatment or procedure (including Against Medical Advice-AMA decisions and LST decisions)
- Appropriate level of care (including discharge planning)
- Naming or updating a surrogate for healthcare decisions
- Revoking a surrogate for healthcare decisions