

## 10 Tips for Working with Limited Resources

Situations where the need for healthcare is greater than the resources available may occur in any practice setting. In these situations, staff must provide nursing care to the best of their ability given the circumstances. If you find yourself working with limited resources, here are 10 strategies to make the situation safer:

### **ASSESS and SET PRIORITIES**

1. Identify and discuss client care needs requiring immediate or urgent attention with your colleagues while ensuring adherence to regulatory nursing standards.
2. Review clients, assessing specific concerns and immediate needs. Differentiate activities that are absolutely necessary from those that can be delayed. Modify clients' plans of care and/or delivery of care as necessary.

### **COLLABORATE and COMMUNICATE**

3. Review the assignment or caseload to determine how to provide care based on client needs. Decide what care can be safely delayed, eliminated, assigned to others or determine if care can be provided in a different way by negotiating with other members of the healthcare team.
4. Meet with your team members or colleagues to review the situation and discuss how and when you will communicate during your shift or work day.
5. Inform clients, as appropriate, about changes in their respective plans of care and provide clear factual information about the care or services they can expect. For clients in the community, ensure that they are aware of what action to take or who to contact if their situation changes.
6. Schedule a brief report or meeting part way through the day or shift to update each other and reassign care accordingly. In community settings, communicate at the end of the work day to highlight or identify clients requiring urgent follow up the next day.
7. Communicate any changes in client conditions, as needed, with other members of the healthcare team.

### **COMMUNICATE and DOCUMENT SAFETY CONCERNS**

8. Decide if your supervisor/manager needs to be informed immediately about the situation. If so, clarify roles and responsibilities for resolving the situation.
9. Document any concerns about the situation and provide a copy to your manager.
10. Be prepared to work collaboratively with your manager to resolve these types of situations by proposing solutions which promote safe, ethical and competent care.

Adapted with permission from *10 Tips for Working with Limited Resources*, March 2010, Vancouver, BC: College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia.

### **Safety Talk Discussion**

**Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!**