

# SKILLS FEST STATION IDEAS





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## Introduction

### What Is A Skills Fest?

Skills Fest is a term given to an interactive learning event for healthcare workers. It is designed to reinforce previously learned information, introduce new concepts, and give evidence-based background for doing what we do in caring for patients/clients/residents. It is intended to be delivered in a fun and interactive environment. The participant assumes the role of the patient/client/resident to experience, as close as possible, what they may feel or go through when trying to accomplish activities of daily living. This experience can increase the empathy of each staff person in understanding the impact of receiving intimate personal care.

The setting for the Skills Fest is a large room where tables (stations) are set up with the different activities described in the following pages. The number of stations would depend on the number of persons/providers involved in presenting the event. The stations can be limited to a specific type of problem, e.g. decubitus ulcers, safety in mobilization, nutrition, etc. or any combination thereof.

This idea originated from an effort to draw together providers from different settings and to allow teaching to occur simultaneously over varying aspects of care. Essentially, it is designed to get the same information out to all care settings with the least amount of effort. The time allotted for the event can be adjusted to accommodate the number of participants expected. One option is to conduct it several hours during the day to allow participants to come and go as their work allows and to reach all shifts of workers. Participants should allow 1-2 hours to complete all stations, based on approximately 10 – 15 minutes per station event. They are asked to sign in and out of the event and will receive a certificate of completion once they have finished the entire set of stations.

### What Is the Benefit of a Skills Fest?

If provided for the direct care worker (Certified Nurse Aides, Home Health Aides, others), the Skills Fest can be an opportunity to make it a special time for this worker and reinforce the importance of their job and what they do for the patient/client/resident. It will also encourage the development of empathy for the patient/client/resident.

The collaboration between providers allows less effort from one specific individual provider (versus if each provider did their own separately) and allows for a change in format to teach topics that staff need to be kept up to date on using a fun, fresh method.

The Skills Fest can also be an opportunity to improve the quality of care in any care setting. Keeping staff competent in the care they provide by periodically reviewing information and updating them with changes is a definite step toward improving patient care. These results may apply directly or indirectly to quality improvement projects providers are currently working on in an effort to improve the quality of patient care. In addition, the experiences can supplement efforts towards culture change by enhancing the caregiver's sensitivity to patient-centered approaches and reinforcing the value and importance of the caregiver's contribution to the team and patient/client/resident.

## TOPIC ONE: Incontinence

*Purpose:* Participants will gain experiential understanding of the emotional and physical stress related to urgency and incontinence.

- **Incontinence Discomfort**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. 10 minute video entitled "Pressure Ulcer Prevention, What Caring People Need to Know!" by Family Health Media
2. Large ziploc bags partially filled with either refried beans or canned pumpkin (to simulate incontinent feces).
3. Urine specimen cup (with screw on lid) partially filled with yellow colored water (to simulate urine).
4. Chair or wheelchair.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are unable to take yourself to the bathroom without assistance. Your nurse aide states she answers her patient's call lights within ten minutes. Sit in this chair on this ziploc bag and hold this specimen cup at shoulder height or higher while watching a short video. This is to show how long ten minutes can feel like when you are waiting. Then imagine if there were no video to distract you from your urgency."

- **Time Voiding**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Adult size briefs

*Instructions:* Hand out to select participants at the registration table.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with incontinence. The restroom is right there. Put on this brief and wear it through the rest of the stations. Return here at the end of the stations to discuss your feelings regarding having to wear a brief."

**Note:** You may pour a small amount of warm water on some briefs, if the participants are willing to endure this.

- **Bladder Control**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Bottled water

*Instructions:* Distribute bottled water to select participants at the registration table.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "Drink this water during the first two stations and do not go to the bathroom until you have gone through all the stations. Return here to discuss your feelings regarding this directive, e.g. loss of independence, being told what to do, etc."

*Discussion/Teaching Points for the above three settings:* Possible feelings of the incontinent person, especially if they are aware of their incontinence; feelings of the person dependent in toileting; the discomfort of wearing adult diapers; how long is 10 minutes when you are waiting with urgency; skin care for the incontinent person; time voiding.

## TOPIC TWO: Disabilities/Limitations of Function

*Purpose:* Participants will experience how different disabilities and specific diseases limit independence.

- **Arthritis:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Roll of stretch adhesive bandage
2. Coins, fork, and/or a Spoon.

*Instructions:* Have participant position their hand like a claw. Use the stretch adhesive bandage to securely wrap the hand and hold it in this position.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “You are a person with severe arthritis. Try to pick up the coins, the fork or the spoon with the affected hand.”

- **Alzheimer’s:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Notepad and pen or pencil
2. Styrofoam cup
3. Change adding up to at least \$3.50
4. Adult size jacket
5. Small mirror at eye level
6. Scotch tape

*Instructions:* Have ten small signs (tents) with the following information on them:

- Write down five ingredients for a cake. Go to Step Two.
- Take \$2.50 out of the change cup. Go to Step Three.
- Go back to Step One and cross out one ingredient on your cake list.
- Go back to Step Two and take another \$.50 out of the cup.
- Put on a jacket.
- Look in the mirror and put a piece of scotch tape on your chin.
- Take off your shoes & then put them back on.
- Take off your ring and watch, then put them back on. Write the time down.
- Go back to Step Six, look in the mirror, and take tape off your chin.
- Go back & redo Steps One and Four.

**Note:** It is good to have the steps at different locations or among other tasks. The point is for the participant to have to remember which step is which and where each was located. The Alzheimer’s patient would have difficulty doing this.

*Provide the following directions to the participant:* “You are a person with Alzheimer’s disease. You are going to make a cake and need to go to the store to get the necessary ingredients. You have five minutes to complete the ten steps outlined on the cards. Start here.”

- **Hip Fracture 1:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:* None needed

*Provide the following directions to the participant:* “State and demonstrate three precautions persons with total hip replacements should observe during the post operative healing period.”

1. No bending past 90 degrees
2. No crossing legs at ankle
3. No twisting at waist

- **Hip Fracture 2:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Floor mat or gurney

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “You are a person that fractured your hip and had to have a total hip replacement. You are in the hospital 2 days after your surgery. You are lying flat on your back in your bed. You are cold and want to pull the blankets over you from the foot of the bed. Please lie on the mat/gurney and demonstrate how you would pull the blankets up over you. Remember, you have been instructed in hip precautions regarding what you cannot do now.”

**Note:** This is impossible for the person to do without violating hip precautions.

- **Hip Fracture 3: Transferring**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Wheelchair and straight chair (to simulate a bedside commode) or two straight chairs.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “You are in the hospital two days after surgery for a total hip replacement. You are in a wheelchair and need to use the bedside commode. Please place yourself in the wheelchair and demonstrate how to transfer to the bedside commode following the hip precautions.”

**Note:** Many people will want to bend forward farther than the 90 degrees allowed when moving from a sitting to standing position. Beware also of twisting at the waist instead of turning the entire body to sit.

- **Parkinson’s 1: Walking:**

*Settings/Materials Needed:*

1. Stretch Therapy Band (for participants to tie around ankles)
2. Masking Tape (To place a ten foot straight line on the floor)

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “You are a person with Parkinson’s disease. To simulate the shuffling gate of Parkinson’s please do the following:

- Tie a Stretch Therapy Band loosely around your ankles.
- Tuck your chin to your chest
- Pull your shoulders back
- Walk ten feet in a straight line along the masking tape while in this position

- **Parkinson's 2: Feeding:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Bowl of round food (Kix or M&M's)
2. Plastic spoon
3. Table & chairs

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with Parkinson's disease. You are sitting at a table with a bowl of food in front of you. You are to use the plastic spoon to feed yourself. During this exercise you need to keep the muscles in your feeding arm tense."

**Note:** While participant does the exercise, stand behind them and jiggle the elbow of the arm they are feeding themselves with to simulate tremors. This exercise simulates the difficulties people with Parkinson's experience regarding fine motor skills.

- **Parkinson's 3: Swallowing**

*Settings/Materials needed:*

1. Caramel candies
2. Napkins or wet naps

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with Parkinson's disease. Place ½ caramel in your mouth and chew briefly. Roll the candy around in your mouth, and open and close your mouth all at the same time.

**Note:** This exercise stimulates the difficulties people with Parkinson's experience regarding swallowing and drooling.

- **Parkinson's 4: Dressing**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Long sleeve shirt with buttons

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with Parkinson's disease. You need to put on a button down shirt. You will constantly keep your dominant hand in a pin-roll motion."

**Note:** This exercise simulates the difficulties people with Parkinson's experience regarding fine motor skills.

- **COPD:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Bullet-proof vest
2. Nose clip
3. Straws (drinking)
4. 2 lb. hand weights

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with COPD (lung disease). Put on this bulletproof vest, place the nose clip on your nose and breathe through the straw. Now take these hand weights and do forearm flexions."

**Note:** Secure the vest snug enough so person will feel some restriction in chest movement along with the weight of the vest. This exercise should give the participant an idea of what it is like to function with the small amount of air (oxygen) that people with lung disease experience with each breath.

- **Blindness/Visual Impairments:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. 3 Small cardboard boxes
2. Picture of pennies on white paper
3. Picture of paper clips on white paper
4. Picture of rubber bands on white paper
5. 3 sets of non-prescription eyeglasses
6. Petroleum jelly

*Preparation for Boxes:*

- Place large number of pennies on copy machine spaced fairly close together. Place white paper over pennies & make a copy. It is best to use a color copier for this to be the most effective.
- Do the same with the paper clips and the rubber bands
- Place one picture in the bottom of each box
- Place three to four real pennies, paperclips or rubber bands on top of the ones in the pictures

*Preparation for Glasses:* Smear different amounts of petroleum jelly on eyeglasses to represent a type of visual disturbance (e.g.) eye blindness, total blindness or diminished vision, and hemianopsia.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with a vision impairment. Choose a set of eyeglasses and put them on. Now look into a box and try to pick up the real items on the paper. No fair rubbing your hand over the paper. You must reach in directly to an object you believe is the real one."

**Note:** Participants may try all three types of glasses and/or all three boxes.

- **General Disability:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Walker
2. Wheelchair
3. Quad cane
4. Non-prescription eyeglasses smeared with petroleum jelly (visual impairment)
5. Cotton balls or ear muffs (deafness)
6. Small smooth pebble (put in shoe for pain or limp)
7. Elastic bandage (wrap dominant arm)
8. Rubber bands or gauze (to wrap fingers)
9. Remove one shoe (limp)

*Instructions:* Select an impairment for the participant to experience and provide and/or apply the materials to simulate that disability

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with (define disability, e.g. deafness, a limp, etc.). You need to participate in some of the stations, go to the restroom, get a snack, etc. with this disability. When you return, we have a form to fill out about how it felt to have that disability." (Or

have a discussion group regarding their feelings instead of the form, and if they will look at someone with that disability differently after this experience.)

- **Obstacle Course:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Wheelchair
2. Cut up apples to placed under the wheelchair cushion to simulate the discomfort of sitting in chair for long periods of time or a bunched up or inadequate cushion.
3. Eyeglasses smeared with petroleum jelly
4. Short obstacle course (plastic cones, etc. to maneuver around.)

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* "You are a person with a visual impairment and in a wheelchair. Put on the eyeglasses and sit in the wheelchair. Now maneuver yourself around the objects in the obstacle course."

- **Gait Belt Non-weight Bearing Transfer:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Gait Belt
2. Two chairs or a wheelchair and a straight chair

*Provide the following instructions to the participants:* "You are a person that has had surgery on your knee and cannot bear weight on that leg. Your caregiver is going to transfer you from the wheelchair to the chair using a gait belt. Be sure not to put weight on your affected leg." Have another participant be the caregiver.

*Discussion/Teaching Points for the ADL/Disability settings:* What does it feel like to have each of these limitations? How does it feel to be limited in your independence? What feelings did you experience while trying to complete the task: (anger, frustration, embarrassment)? What was the most frustrating and the least frustrating disability for you? Discuss precautions to take with each type of disability/limitation, body alignment and lifting/transferring clients, safe use of a gait belt.

## TOPIC THREE: Nutrition

*Purpose:* Participants will experience the taste of different nutritional supplements and what it feels like to be fed by someone else. They will gain understanding regarding why people may be reluctant to consume their supplements or special diets, as well as why it is important to be sure the individual is actually getting their supplement or meal.

- **Supplement Tasting:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Liquid supplements of different types (some chilled, some at room temperature)
2. Other types of supplements (power potatoes, ensure cookies, sugar cereal bars, as well as pureed food)

- **Feeding:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Two chairs
2. Table
3. Blindfold
4. Disposable paper cups
5. Disposable plastic spoons and forks
6. Napkins
7. Foods with different tastes and textures, such as pudding and pickles

*Preparations:* Assign one participant to be the “patient”. Sit this person in a chair and blindfold them. Place a small amount of pudding in a disposable cup and a small piece of pickle in another cup.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “You are a person unable to feed yourself and cannot see the food you are being fed.” Assign another participant to feed the patient and have them sit in a chair next to the patient.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant doing the feeding:* “You are to feed your patient these foods. Do not tell them what they are eating or when you are switching from one food to the next.”

**Note:** It is best if the “patient” does not hear the instructions to the person doing the feeding. The person feeding the “patient” should also be encouraged to either rush the feeding or feed very slowly.

- **Adaptive Devices for Feeding:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:* Different adaptive devices individuals may need in order to feed themselves.

*Instructions:* Allow participants to manipulate the different devices to gain understanding of how they are to be used and how they may help patients be more successful at using them.

- **Hydration/Dehydration 1:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Dry and/or salty snack foods (crackers, popcorn, chips, etc.)
2. Small plates or cups to serve the snacks in/on
3. Short video on nutrition (approximately 10-15 minutes in length)
4. TV/VCR to show video on.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “You are to eat one cup (determine the appropriate amount) of one or more of these snacks while watching this video. You may not drink anything until we are finished.”

- **Hydration/Dehydration 2:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Raisins
2. Two small containers
3. Water enough to cover a small amount of raisins
4. Magnifying glass
5. Moisturizing lotion

*Preparation:* Cover a small number of raisins with water and allow them to plump approximately 10 minutes prior to the start of the event. Place an equal number of raisins in a container without water.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “Take the magnifying glass and look at the skin on your hands. Look also at the difference between the raisins soaking in water and the ones not in water. Now apply lotion to your hands and look at them under the magnifying glass again.”

*Discussion/Teaching Points for the nutrition settings:* Feelings regarding how it feels to be fed, especially if not talking to the patient while feeding them; would you be compliant if you needed to take food/drink supplements; general fluid and nutrition needs of the elderly; why is it important to give fluids with snacks and meals; signs and symptoms of dehydration.

## TOPIC FOUR: Skin Care

*Purpose:* Participants will learn causes of skin breakdown and ways to alleviate pressure and prevent breakdown.

- **Use of Moisture Barrier:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Moisture barrier cream
2. Large container (bucket, bowl, basin) containing water with red food coloring added (or other bright color of your choice)
3. Towels to dry hands

*Instructions:* Apply moisture barrier to one hand of each participant.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “Immerse both hands in the colored water and hold them there for approximately two minutes. When you remove your hands from the water, note how the water beads up on the hand with the moisture barrier on it. Now dry them on this towel and note the difference in the amount of color that stays on the hand that did not have the moisture barrier on it.”

- **Use of Lotion on Dry Skin**

*Setting/Material Needed:*

1. Several medium to large sized onions
2. Lotion
3. Sock or nylon

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “You are helping an elderly person to put on their socks. This onion is his/her foot with dry, thin skin. Place the onion in the sock without losing the skin off the onion. Then put lotion on the onion and put it in the sock without losing the skin off the onion.”

*Discussion/Teaching Points for the two above scenarios:* Principles of good skin care; use of skin barriers; effects of incontinence on tissue integrity; how, when and why to use lotion.

- **Friction/Shearing:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Waxed paper
2. Fine sandpaper

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “Place a piece of waxed paper on the wall and put your hand in the center of the paper with palm against the paper. Push against the wall while pulling the paper down the wall with the same hand. Feel the pulling and uncomfortable sensation against the palm of your hand.”

OR

“Place a piece of waxed paper behind you against the wall. Press your back against the wall and slide down. Note the sensation of the rough wall through the waxed paper”

OR

“Place hand #1 on the waxed paper that is covering the sandpaper. With the hand #2 hold the corner of the sandpaper. Applying slight pressure move hand #1 and the waxed paper across the sandpaper.”

- **Pressure Ulcer Development:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Blood pressure cuffs.

*Instructions:* Place BP cuff on participant’s arm and pump up to 60 mm HG. Leave the cuff inflated at 60 mm Hg for approximately two minutes. Inform the participant: “This is the amount of pressure it takes for a pressure ulcer to begin to develop.”

*Discussion/Teaching Points for the above two scenarios:* Pressure Points; turning/repositioning; use of draw sheet to move patients; ways to avoid shearing.

- **Skin Tears:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Medium sized fresh tomatoes.
2. Adhesive bandages

*Preparation:* Place a band-aid on the tomato.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “This tomato represents an elderly person with thin fragile skin. Please remove the bandage with tearing the skin off the tomato.”

OR

A seamstress’ dress form wrapped in tissue paper can be used in place of tomatoes.

*Discussion/Teaching Points:* Skin changes in the elderly, good skin care.

## TOPIC FIVE: Infection Control

*Purpose:* Participants will review proper handwashing technique and how easily germs may be spread if handwashing is not done properly.

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Glow Light
2. Glow lotion
3. Non-latex gloves (in case of latex allergy)
4. Shaving cream
5. Paper towels

*Give the following instructions to the participant:* “You are caring for a patient with a contagious disease who is also incontinent of stool. Put on a pair of gloves. I will put some shaving cream on the gloves to represent the “germs” you picked up on your gloves while caring for this patient. (Squirt a liberal amount of shaving cream in the hands and have them smear it over the gloves.) Now remove the gloves using the correct procedure without contaminating yourself or anything else around you.”

**(Note:** You can review the proper method of removing soiled gloves if you feel this is needed. A written handout/flyer would be helpful.) After completing that:

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “Now rub some of this lotion (glow lotion) on your hands. Go wash your hands and return here.”

**(Note:** You may want to review proper handwashing with them at this time. Having a handout/flyer with the technique would be good.)

*Instructions upon participant’s return:* “Place your just washed hands under the glow light to see how effective your handwashing technique was in preventing the spread of germs.”

**Note:** Areas not fully washed will have residue of glow lotion that will illuminate under the glow light.

*Discussion/Teaching Points:* Proper glove removal, proper handwashing, universal precautions, quiz on infection control.

## TOPIC SIX: Pain

*Purpose:* Participants will learn the concept that each person has their own perception of pain and what level is tolerable. Hopefully, they will begin to be able to recognize and respect this difference and report pain in their patients/clients/residents.

- **Perception:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Clip clothespins
2. Short clip from pain management video approximately 10 minutes.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “We are going to watch a short video on pain management. When the video starts, clip a clothespin to your forearm, finger or ear lobe. When it becomes uncomfortable to have the clothespin on, take it off and write down the pain intensity (0-10) that you are feeling when you removed the clothespin.”

- **Distraction:**

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Cotton balls
2. Baggies
3. Several items to smell such as mentholated rub, alcohol, vanilla, scented candles or oils.

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “These baggies contain different scents. Smell each and identify which scent, if any, would be a comfort scent to you. Then tell us why you chose that scent.”

*Provide the following instructions to the participant:* “Place a clothespin back on your finger, forearm or ear lobe. I am going to give you a short shoulder/neck rub. Does your pain level change at all from the first time?”

*Discussion/Teaching Points:* Pain is an individual, objective experience; what to ask the patient having pain; what and when to report pain; what is distraction. You can also have a Word Find puzzle of words describing pain for participants to complete.

## TOPIC SEVEN: Oral Care

*Purpose:* Participants will experience being dependent in oral care.

*Setting/Materials Needed:*

1. Toothbrushes for all participants
2. Tooth paste (different flavors)
3. Mouthwash (different brands)
4. Mouth spongettes
5. Emesis basins or other basin
6. Water
7. Disposable cups

*Give the following instructions to the participant:* Each participant needs a partner.

“Select either a toothbrush or a spongette and a type of toothpaste. Hand these to your partner and they will brush your teeth for you. Also choose a type of mouthwash and rinse with the mouthwash after you have your teeth brushed.”

*Discussion/Teaching Points:* Proper oral hygiene, oral hygiene for bedbound and/or comatose patients. How did it feel to have someone brush your teeth for you? What did the person do that made you feel comfortable? What made you feel uncomfortable? Does this experience make it easier or harder to have a relationship with this person?

## **OTHER POSSIBLE TOPICS:**

- Use of patient lifts
- Abuse/Neglect education using the video "In Your Hands"
- Quality Measure/Indicators education
- Phone etiquette
- Education regarding the importance of touch, pressure points, range of motion (can use a massage therapist)
- Education regarding aromatherapy, music therapy, relaxation techniques
- View "Bathing Without a Battle" regarding non-traditional bathing techniques
- Checking vital signs, weights, blood sugars
- Have someone from another culture or religious background share their beliefs/customs & how that relates to our healthcare system
- View partially eaten food trays and chart percentages eaten
- Taste thickened liquids and educate regarding how & when to use them
- Provide information or demonstration booths from other relevant sources, e.g. fire dept., wound care company, hospice, etc.
- Have someone demonstrate pressure mapping for wheelchair clients.

*Teaching topics are not limited to those listed here. Please use your imagination & creativity to create some of your own learning experiences.*

## **HELPFUL HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SKILLS FEST:**

- Have giveaways at each station/booth, preferably related to the topic of that station such as cards showing the pressure points
- Have each station/booth clearly identified
- Have a list of the stations/booths & a brief description of each for participants to carry with them and check off as they go
- Have each participant sign in and out
- Give participants a certificate when they complete the course
- Have a kitchen and bathroom nearby
- Have refreshments and/or door prizes

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