

SPEECH NOTES

How could I educate staff on trying new ways of working?, how could I get staff to trust in me?

My answer: - education, sharing ideas and working along side them.

I undertook training sessions with staff on the Spark of Life Approach so they were more informed of the way we wanted Duncan Lodge to be. I listened to staff on the ways they worked and challenged them to try new things. I worked with all staff members on the floor. In my capacity as an OT I completed washing and dressing assessments alongside care givers and discussed alternative ways to enable residents to participate in personal care tasks and maximise their optimal ability. Simple things like talking to residents throughout the task, giving residents a choice of two items of clothing everyday and asking 'today is it is this or this', giving residents a flannel and asking them to wash themselves in the shower – giving verbal or physical prompting, laying clothing out in order of sequence so current skill levels could be maximised. Giving residents a choice on time of rising – my expectations were not that all residents would be up and dressed and in the lounge for morning tea.

For myself I also spoke to staff about their own cultural beliefs. From this I understood more about where staff were coming from in their care of residents – that the focus was on making sure residents were washed, dressed, warm and fed. I took this on board but also spoke with staff on how we needed to think about what was important to our residents – had they always been up washed and dressed by 8am or did they like to walk around in their bed clothes and have a drink before dressing? How would staff feel if they were sound asleep and got woken up and put under a shower without knowing what was happening?

I also did activities with residents so staff could see how they could make a difference and that residents were able to engage in activities if they were meaningful to them. Staff challenged me as the 'end result' may not have been perfect. I discussed with staff that I was not concerned with the end result but that residents were engaged and well being had been enhanced through participation.

I developed rummage boxes and baskets and left them around the unit. Left linen out so residents could fold it if they wished to and left magazines out for residents to look through. Again staff challenged this and put everything away so the unit 'looked tidy'. I was puzzled by this and again spoke to staff and understood that to them it was important for everything to be put away and tidy. Thinking of the overall aim to replicate normal daily living I discussed with staff that Duncan Lodge was our residents home not a hospital and it was ok if things were left out. This was a way for our residents to connect with their surroundings and initiate activity for themselves thus enabling independence.

Finally, staff embraced the changes. I think that they saw how things I did with residents had a positive effect and they wanted to try it themselves. Also because they knew what my expectations were, particularly about personal cares that they became more relaxed and willing to try new things.

Because staff became more relaxed in their work so to did residents which assisted in creating a more 'relaxed homely atmosphere'.

To develop this further I introduced 'daily routines' to the unit that staff could invite residents to join in. This included collecting morning and afternoon tea and helping to serve it, setting tables for lunch and dinner and wiping tables down, folding the towels or pillow cases and delivering the clean towels to residents rooms for the afternoon staff. This helped the staff to work within the framework of the Spark of Life approach by including residents in their usually daily tasks. It supported relationships with staff and residents to enhance therapeutic rapport. Staff could also see that residents really enjoyed helping the staff to 'do things' and made them feel 'useful', thus boosting their feelings of self esteem.

I also asked the staff to say 'thank you' to residents when they have provided assistance in any way. I too used this strategy with staff to give positive reinforcement to the work they had been doing. I think this assisted staff to trust me and believe in what I was trying to achieve as they could see how making small changes made a big difference on the well being of the residents. Another way I thanked staff (with the support of my superiors) was to introduce a buffet meal for lunch one day a week for residents to enable them to choose what they would like to eat. Staff also share this meal with residents in the dining area. As well as a 'perk' for staff it also assists to make mealtimes a more sociable time where staff can join with residents again to promote a homely atmosphere and build and maintain relationships with staff and residents.

Introducing 'normal activities' was a huge thing on Duncan Lodge that took time but was so worth it. I actively encourage staff to sit with residents in the afternoon to have a drink with them, chat about life, look through magazines, go out for walks or into the community. Following the Spark of Life principles staff need to share part of themselves with residents and these activities encourage this.

Staff now initiate activities with residents everyday from walking, exercises, physical games and reminiscence. One member of staff even setting up a Kapa Haka group which residents and families enjoy.

Involvement in activities has also assisted when a resident displays an unmet need. By engaging residents in activities the focus is on the activity. Afternoon activities, especially before dinner time have assisted to support residents who become unsettled and want to leave the unit. Similarly if a resident wants to 'go home' in the afternoon staff will take residents for short walks around the grounds and then invite residents to come for a 'cup of tea' and 'join us for dinner'.