



Stimulating the senses



Enriching interactions between high-care dementia residents and their care staff and families using sensory stimulation, is the goal of a program at Amana Living's St George's Nursing Home.

The 80 bed high-care nursing home in Bayswater, Western Australia, began implementing the use of 'sensory bags' last August as a way of increasing activity and responsiveness amongst residents identified as being at risk of sensory deprivation.

Team Leader, Enrichment and volunteers, Elizabeth Oliver, said the program which was carried out over a four-month period, using sensory boxes made for each of these residents by therapy staff.








"The sensory boxes were plastic takeaway containers divided into four

sections. Each section contained small sachets filled with strong smelling familiar items e.g. coffee beans, cinnamon sticks, lavender, rose petals and cloves. The boxes were stored in resident rooms. Each day the therapy assistant would fasten a different sachet to the resident's clothing or pillow.

The majority of published studies on sensory stimulation have found positive results in terms of increased arousal and responsiveness. Elizabeth

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This month's issue of *The Standard* features a range of initiatives used within residential aged care homes to provide quality care for residents.

The assessment teams are progressing through accreditation visits as we proceed through the peak accreditation round. As we continue with this work, approved providers are invited to submit responses to the major findings reported at the end of accreditation site audits and review audits. The major findings are provided to residential aged care homes in the form of a written report.

Where non-compliance is being considered by a decision-maker as a result of a support contact visit, an approved provider will be contacted by the decision-maker and invited to submit a response before any decision is made. Timeframes apply to responses. These are specified in reports and other correspondence from us.

Our series of 2009 Better Practice events begin next month, with the first being held in Adelaide from 28-29 May. Major themes for this year's events are:

- Improving resident care and lifestyle through person-centred care
- Investing to improve quality and control costs
- Improving performance through monitoring and key indicators
- Improving the organisation through effective leadership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mark Brandon'.

Mark Brandon
Chief Executive Officer

said the St George's outcomes for residents were also very positive.

"Families, staff and residents have all been very positive about the program, with the sensory stimulation working to improve resident alertness and responsiveness. It has also assisted with the levels of interaction of some of our residents by triggering memories and aiding new conversations," said Elizabeth.

However, it was found that many of the sachets were getting lost either being thrown out or ending up in the laundry.

In addition, storage of the sachets using these containers was contributing to cross contamination of the different smells.

Through further research and trialing, a revised program has now been implemented at St George's, incorporating improvements such as:

- limiting of sessions to approximately 20 minutes depending on the resident's concentration and attention span
- using multimodal stimulation (e.g. stimulating more than one of the senses in a treatment session) which can produce a greater change in behavioural responsiveness than unimodal stimulation
- storage of the sachets in the Occupational Therapist office, with separate plastic containers for each scent to prevent contamination and ensure the sachets are not misplaced and
- including of a wider range of smells such as peppermint oil, eucalyptus oil, garlic, herbal teas, favourite foods, strong perfumes and aftershaves.



Enhanced behaviour with interpersonal contact

Intimately knowing the resident behind the dementia has been the aim of RSL Lifecare's Peter Cosgrove House, Sydney, following the implementation of its 'Positive Connections' program.

The program aims to foster strong relationships between residents with high levels of mental confusion and their care staff. Sincere interactions between staff and residents have taken these relationships beyond the standard approach of distracting confused residents.

Four years ago, the home recognised staff did not really know the resident behind the dementia, said Deputy CEO, Carolyn Kwok. "We felt it was important to really know a resident's everyday life prior to admission. That way, we can understand the cues for their behaviour management and why certain behaviours occur.

"We also found it was important to bring the person into the foreground and minimise the misinformation surrounding dementia."

Carolyn said that getting detailed histories from a resident's family builds a total picture of each resident's life. These details are obtained using detailed 'dementia specific' questionnaires completed by family members as part of the pre-admission process. This data is then recorded by care staff forming of a 'short biography' which is for staff use and also displayed in the resident's room.

The benefits, said Carolyn, have been wide ranging. "Staff have made many positive comments. For example, one told us that before the program, she did not know that some female residents like being sprayed with perfume before bedtime.

"Another staff member told us that her care approaches have changed now, with the short bios being a conversation focus for helping to focus the resident and overcome agitated behaviour.

"One resident's daughter also told us about how lovely it has been to talk about her mother in positive terms since the dementia diagnosis, and that was lovely to hear," said Carolyn.

RSL Lifecare now has the services of a psychologist on board to ensure consistency of practice for the 'Positive Connections' program. The organisation has also extended the program to several of its other homes.



Learning within the workplace

Goodwin Aged Care brought in educators from the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency to deliver a seminar in risk management direct to its senior managers.

This seminar is usually delivered off-site to representatives from different residential aged care homes, but by bringing it to their Ainslie facility, Goodwin Aged Care was able to ensure all their senior managers could benefit.

Goodwin's CEO, Bruce McKenzie, said all staff benefitted from knowing more about risk management, regardless of where they work within the organisation.

"We continually strive to improve the quality of care for residents, and to do that all our staff need to be focused on the same goals," he said.

"This course helped everyone gain a better understanding of risk management as a useful management tool and so will allow each of them to be better managers in their own area. The end result is better care for our residents," Mr McKenzie said.



Seminars

Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd

Seminars

The series of one-day seminars to the industry aims to equip key personnel with the skills and knowledge that will improve quality of care for residents.

Organisation-direct training

Our seminars can be delivered direct to your organisation at your nominated facility. For more information contact 1800 728 589 or visit our website www.accreditation.org.au/education/organisation-direct-seminars to download an Expression of Interest form to receive a detailed proposal.

		Seminars		
		Evidence-based practice	Continuous improvement	Managing risk to avoid non-compliance
NSW /ACT	5 May 2009, Armidale	21 May 2009, Canberra 28 May 2009, Dubbo 23 June 2009, St Ives	11 June 2009, Armidale	
QLD			2 June 2009, Stones Corner	6 May 2009, Toowoomba 16 June 2009, Hervey Bay 28 May 2009, Brisbane CBD
VIC	1 May 2009, Melbourne CBD 23 June 2009, Geelong		7 May 2009, Melbourne CBD 12 May 2009, Ballarat	25 May 2009, Melbourne CBD
SA/NT				18 June 2009, Darwin
WA				6 May 2009, Bunbury 17 June 2009, Broome

For more information, visit our website www.accreditation.org.au/education or call 1800 728 589.

Puppetry - not just for kids

Using the power of puppetry in order for residents with dementia to connect with their memories and happy times, has been the goal of puppetry therapy sessions held at Anglican Care's Carey Bay Village, New South Wales.



Activities Officer and long-time puppeteer Shelley Moses discovered the magic of puppets back in 2005, when she brought her 'baby Jessie' puppet in to meet some of the residents. "We had one resident whose dementia had recently worsened a great deal and the resident was displaying some quite difficult behaviours," she said. "But when 'Jessie' started 'talking' to the resident, the puppet completely calmed the resident and was really comforted by 'Jessie'. It had a brilliant, positive effect on the resident's emotions."

Now residents are treated to therapeutic sessions with 'Jessie', as well as other well-known puppets such as the 88 year old resident lady puppet 'Patience Molesworth' who loves a good joke or two.

"Residents have displayed great feedback from the sessions which produce a lot of fun and laughter," said Shelley. "The puppets are particularly good at supporting residents during the sometimes tricky stage of the evening. Sometimes, puppets even follow residents to their room where they continue to interact with them."

She continued: "A daughter of a resident who particularly enjoys the puppets told us this was the first time her mum had laughed in a very long time."



Residents 'wrapped' with this outcome

Knitting and crocheting rugs for disadvantaged people in third world countries has been the focus for a group of low-care residents with dementia at the St Catherine's Hostel in Wangaratta, Victoria.

Called the 'Wraps with love' program, the hostel was thrilled to receive an Award for Excellence as part of the Dementia and Recreation Conference 2008, held in Melbourne. The award included a plaque and \$1000 for the hostel.

"We are very proud of the award," said Hostel Manager Erika Williams, "as it praised us for the development, philosophy, benefit and overall impact the residents achieved".

She said a group of 10 residents regularly spent one and a half hours per week together, producing the rug 'squares' which eventually formed a total of four rugs for the program. "Some residents were also very enthusiastic about producing rug 'squares' in their own time."

Erika said "Participating residents experienced a range of benefits including providing the knowledge that their craft activity would contribute to helping those less fortunate."

"We also saw the activity was an enjoyable one which improved residents' mobility and hand dexterity," she said.

Dancing the blues away

Bupa Dural trialled a dance therapy program to improve the mobility, joint range and the psychological condition of residents. The dance therapy program became a finalist in Positive Living In Aged Care Awards, Aged Care Channel 'Idea of the year' Award and Bupa's Business Awards.



Residents requested a more interesting program be provided as they had become bored with the regular exercise classes provided.

Trial group

The dance therapy program involved 14 residents in the trial group, and a control group.

All residents had some degree of visual and/or hearing impairment and complex medical conditions. 40 per cent had dementia and some were wheelchair bound.

At the beginning of the trial, 82 per cent had depression compared to 64 per cent in the control group. The Cornell Scale was used to measure joint range and mobility scores.

The program

The half hour sessions were conducted over a 12 week period, up to twice a week.

At the end of the trial period, 50 per cent had improved their joint range and 75 per cent the mobility scale.

Program benefits

As well as enjoying themselves, residents were able to express a wide range of emotions and feelings. The dance therapy program provided an outlet for expressing long-held grief and loss. Building self esteem, reducing isolation and bonding also occurred. Residents displayed their creativity and spontaneous movement, with moments of reminiscing evolving at times.



Providing for resident needs

Last year in our special risk management three-part series of *The Standard*, we looked closely at the Accreditation Standards where residential aged care homes were non-compliant in client outcomes and were not managing risk. Our prime focus is that residents in residential aged care homes receive the appropriate care and services. To that end we expect homes to demonstrate that there are appropriately skilled and qualified staff in sufficient numbers to ensure services are delivered in accordance with the Accreditation Standards and the individual needs of residents are met.

Any staff carrying out specialised nursing services, or indeed lifestyle care, must carry out these tasks subject to appropriate training, assessment of competency and appropriate supervision by a relevantly qualified professional.

A registered nurse is responsible for the initial and on-going assessment and management of care for residents but this does not preclude persons other than registered nurses, such as enrolled nurses or personal care assistants, assisting the registered nurse carry out the assessment, planning and

management of care for residents. This could include carrying out measurements and making observations, and in general compiling information used for assessing residents' needs under a registered nurse's direction and supervision.

In addition, medical practitioners and other health professionals may (and do) make assessments of residents, prepare plans and prescribe or recommend particular care and this could be taken into account in planning overall care and services for residents.

Taking care of the lives in our hands

Bupa Croydon was proud to support a fellow provider of aged care during the recent bush fire crisis in Victoria.

As fires once again threatened the Warburton area, a local residential aged care home made the decision to evacuate their residents to ensure their safety. Bupa's staff rose to the challenge following a call late one Sunday evening, making 10 beds available for extra residents and coordinating their transport.

The evening staff were a powerhouse of efficiency readying rooms for arrival and arranging a late supper for the incoming residents. Staff went the 'extra mile' to ensure that each resident was settled and felt comfortable in their new surroundings. The next job was contacting the families of each new resident, updating them on what had happened and reassuring them in regards to the health and safety of their relative. There were some late night phone calls made but staff were buoyed by the obvious appreciation of families for keeping them informed.

Making the move as stress free as possible considering the circumstances, the night staff took it all in their stride taking extra care to ensure some tender loving care for those having trouble settling and for ensuring a positive and friendly



environment to head off any confusion or worries upon waking in their new surroundings.

It can take some time for residents to settle into a new residential aged care home but with the warm welcome from staff and residents, the 'newbies' took part in activities and became a valued addition straight away.

One staff member's enthusiasm for entertaining led to quite an exchange between residents of ideas and successes in their respective homes, which will keep staff at both facilities on their toes for some time to come.

After almost a fortnight at Bupa the 'newbies' were able to return home and we miss them. Bupa would have them back in a heartbeat and have been inspired by the

opportunity to contribute in their time of need.

Staff throughout Bupa are proud of their Croydon colleagues and other Bupa facilities who have contributed through volunteer work in local country fire associations, volunteering their time to help gather food and clothing, fundraising to support the bushfire crisis victims and working that little bit harder to ensure visiting residents felt especially safe and secure.

Registration of aged care quality assessors update

Penny Fraser was appointed the Registrar of aged care quality assessor from 1 October 2008. Penny is an Agency employee located at our Parramatta office.

All assessors on the register will remain on the register until their expiry date when they will be required to renew their registration as required by the Accreditation Grant Principles 1999.

Any enquiries about registration should be directed to Penny Fraser on email registrar@accreditation.org.au or phone 02 8831 1070.

The registration documents including the assessor register, are now available within the Assessor information section within www.accreditation.org.au.





Do you want to contribute to quality?



Quality
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Make a commitment to ensuring quality of care for older Australians.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd looks for assessors from time to time to join our offices in Brisbane, Parramatta, Newcastle, Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide, Mittagong and Perth.

We will provide you with initial training through our Aged Care Quality Assessment Course and you will continue to receive update training and other learning and development opportunities throughout your career with us. Our assessor training and management program has been certified at world's best practice by the International Society for Quality in health care. We will also pay your annual registration fee, as well as the fees for a national police check.

We're committed to creating an environment where you receive training and support using our learning and development framework. This is part of our commitment to our employees.


Good analytical, computer, written and verbal communication skills, strong interpersonal skills and a commitment to quality are required to succeed in this role.

Travelling to aged care homes throughout the state is part of the job. A driver's licence is essential.

A remuneration package commencing at \$71,292 increasing to a maximum of \$87,000 (inclusive of superannuation) will be offered to successful candidates.

How to apply:

Download an employment application from our website www.accreditation.org.au. Click on 'employment' and read some career profiles from our assessors. Send your covering letter, resume and completed application form to careers@accreditation.org.au Or call Grace Sevilla on 02 8831 1001.

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