

# Delivering the Occupational Therapy Activity Toolkit to improve quality of life of residents with a dementia in a residential care home; utilising community projects and social care students: a pilot service development.

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**Rational**  
Clinicians recognise resident's quality of life could be enhanced through homely environments and meaningful activity. Care home residents should have active roles in choosing and participating in meaningful activity which promotes wellbeing<sup>1</sup>. Exploring life histories, engaging in familiar activities and maintaining community links can improve quality of life and resident's connectedness to their self-identity<sup>2</sup>. To maintain resident's personhood; access to meaningful activities, opportunities to feel useful and valued and family/ community links were deemed important<sup>3</sup>. If care home staff have a better understanding of meaningful activity, community occupational therapists could be better utilised.



## OUTCOMES/THEMES

<b>Resident's quality of life</b> <b>Pre:</b> 5/10 residents have certain control, activity staff have more control <b>Post:</b> 9/10 choice, control and dignity were encouraged when engaging	<b>Home environment</b> <b>Recommendations from Residential Environmental Impact Scale<sup>4</sup>:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use indoor, outside space and equipment better</li><li>• Orientation boards</li><li>• More sensory equipment/ rummage boxes</li></ul> <b>Since recommendations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing outside space</li><li>• Activities are accessible</li></ul>	<b>Occupational therapy toolkit<sup>5</sup></b> <b>Pre:</b> no prior knowledge <b>Post:</b> "handouts were beneficial reference points for exchanging ideas and experiences" Enabled staff to identify new ways of working, new activities	<b>Job/staff satisfaction</b> <b>Pre:</b> "would like to do more", not always recognising opportunities Not enough time <b>Post:</b> Staff better understand engaging residents Rethinking their working day, "Valuing small things we do with residents" Recognising they were already engaging in meaningful activity Reflected and desire more training	<b>Meaningful activity</b> <b>Pre:</b> "organised activity, structured group, entertainment, outings" "Meaningful activity is activity coordinator role" Difficulty seeing residents as able <b>Post:</b> generating conversations, identifying wider opportunities and trying activities
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**Impact on the NHS trust**  
"By empowering care home staff to see patients as people with histories and lives we are enabling them to improve the quality of their care, and the range of activities utilised with patients. For the Trust this will reduce referrals and will help the care home staff to work with Trust staff with confidence." NHS Operational Service Manager.

**Limitations**

- Some staff have limited understanding or confidence with meaningful activity
- Limited time to plan and engage
- Needs senior staff driving changes
- Some staff feel they need permission delivering meaningful activity
- Culture change needed; despite increased knowledge some felt it's the activity coordinators role

**What happened next**

- Activity coordinator supervision sessions running and pen pal services
- Developing social media pages for homes
- Developing and delivering training into other residential homes
- Supporting college students to volunteer with residential home activity coordinators
- 'Keeping you in mind' linking college students with residents to develop relationships

**Next steps**

- Invested named staff taking on roles, ensuring changes
- Toolkits available
- Promoting animal therapy
- Develop websites to join homes with local communities
- Ongoing in reach occupational therapy
- Further dementia and occupational therapy specific training
- Presenting findings to NHS trust

**"There has been without doubt a positive shift in staff thinking and understanding following this training and their reflection on it. I have seen this as a very supportive, worthwhile and very interesting experience which is creating positive results."**  
*Residential Home Manager*  
**"I feel much more like I work with the residents rather than for the residents."**  
*Residential Home staff*

**Why Occupational therapy?**

- Utilises a holistic approach
- Advise and adapt environments
- Enable and encourage meaningful activity
- Use the occupational therapy toolkit
- Problem solving
- Grading activity

Photos used on this poster are our own and we have consent to share them as appropriate and relevant.  
**References**  
1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2013) Mental wellbeing of older people in care homes (NICE quality standard 50). Manchester: NICE. Available at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/QS50>. 2. Cooney, A., Dowling, M., Gannon, M.E., Dempsey, L., Murphy, K. (2014) Exploration of the meaning of connectedness for older people in long-term care in context of their quality of life: a review and commentary. International Journal of Older People Nursing. 9(3), 192-199. 3. Milte, R., Shulver, W., Kilington, M., Bradley, C., Ratcliffe, J., Crotty, M. (2016) Quality in residential care from the perspective of people living with Dementia: The importance of personhood. Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics, 63, 9-17. 4. Fisher, G., Forsyth, K., Harrison, M., Angarola, R., Kayhan, E., Noga, P., Johnson, C. & Irvine, L. (2014). Residential Environment Impact Scale (REIS). Version 4.0. Model of Human Occupation Clearinghouse, Department of Occupational Therapy, University of Illinois at Chicago. 5. College of Occupational Therapists. (2015) Living well through activity in care homes: the toolkit. London: COT.