

Quality Palliative Care in Long Term Care Alliance

Together We Make a Difference!

Participatory Action Research

The QPC-LTC Alliance is a project guided by the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) which simply put means researchers and participants are "learning by doing" together. Its focus is on making real changes in real situations. PAR believes that participants should have the opportunity to shape the changes that affect them and, in this project, PAR is being used to develop palliative care programs in four long term care homes. The LTC staff, residents, families and community partners are crucial to the project as they have expertise and resources for improving the quality of lives of LTC residents who are receiving palliative care.

PAR requires true collaboration. The people affected by the research become researchers who work with those who have specialized research training. The involvement of Personal Support Workers (PSWs) is very important to the success of the QPC-LTC Alliance and one PSW from each of the LTC homes is joining our research team. These four PSW's will act as liaisons with other PSWs, involving and sharing information with their co-workers. When using PAR, a sense of ownership is created, capacities are built, and individuals and organizations are empowered. Using PAR means that learning is more likely to be applied and changes are sustained.

Researchers using participatory methods listen respectfully, guide and facilitate discussions, ensure that key questions are answered, encourage trust, help bring together the views of various people involved in the process, and create an environment for dialogue, sharing and reflection. Unlike other forms of research, the results of the research are not withheld until the study is completed. Throughout the process, participants will see results. Thus, your contributions to the research will be put into action right away!

One of the methods we will be using to share our learning is through the use of this monthly newsletter. In addition, we will use many other methods of sharing knowledge such as conferences, websites and newsletters. If you have a suggestion for us to share our emerging knowledge within the QPC-LTC Alliance, please let a member of our team know.

Upcoming:

Information from our Community Partner and Research Alliance Meeting held on November 27th/ 09

Meet Jackie McDonald, Personal Support Worker at Bethammi (Thunder Bay)

Meet Benjamin Mireku

Graduate Student in the Masters of Public Health Program (MPH) with Gerontology Specialization, Lakehead University. Benjamin has joined the QPC-LTC research team.



Background

I am a registered Nurse from Ghana, Africa. I attained my Bachelors degree in Nursing/Psychology from the University of Ghana. I then proceeded to Karolinska Medical institute, Stockholm, Sweden and graduated with Master's in Safety Promotion and Injury Prevention. I hope to attain my MPH and later PhD, and then to return to Ghana to teach in the university.

My Experience with the QPC-LTC Research Team

My involvement in the research team has been a great learning experience for me so far. As a nurse, I have worked on various clinical teams. While learning has always been a part of these teams, I have never been on a team whose specific purpose was centered on Research. One very perfect thing about the team is that it has an effective method of communication. High-performing teams have extensive communication mechanisms. We communicate regularly with each other whether in person, via telephone, or through e-mail and each member of the team is always in tune with the group's progress. This group also has an effective leadership. The level of leadership in the project is amazing. Every team member has clear cut duties and responsibilities. I have learned that all groups need leadership. I am in a very perfect team and I'm determined to contribute my quota for the realization of the objectives and goals of the team as we learn from each other.

Questions?

Please forward questions or comments to:

Dr. Mary Lou Kelley, Principal Investigator
mlkelley@lakeheadu.ca

Dr. Sharon Kaasalainen, Co-Investigator
kaasal@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca,



Centre for Education
and Research on
Aging & Health

Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

