Best Practice Guidelines for Multi-Sensory Stimulation Therapy: A Palliative Care Intervention

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Introduction

- The need for LTC beds will increase tenfold with Canada’s aging population (Alzheimer Society, 2010)

- Currently, 65% or more of residents in Ontario’s LTC homes have dementia (Alzheimer Society Ontario, 2010)

- 67% of dementia-related deaths occur in nursing homes (Mitchell, et al., 2005)

- Individualized activities and resources are needed in LTC that will benefit this population
Introduction

Multi-Sensory Stimulation (MSS) Therapy - aka Snoezelen

- Involves stimulating senses, connecting and interacting with LTC residents with minimal verbal communication, particularly those with dementia.

- Used commonly in long-term care homes for therapeutic and recreational purposes.

- Little knowledge exists on how to best utilize this resource in LTC, particularly for residents living with dementia at the end-of-life.
Quality Palliative Care in Long-Term Care Homes (QPC-LTC)

- Improve the quality of life for residents in LTC
- Develop interprofessional palliative care programs
- Create partnerships between LTC homes, community organizations and researchers
- Create a toolkit for developing palliative care in LTC Homes that can be shared nationally
- Promote the role of the Personal Support Worker in palliative care
### Background

Two of the four LTC homes have invested in MSS therapy equipment and have a dedicated room.

Environmental Scan revealed this resource was underutilized.

A needs assessment was completed to understand the barriers and facilitators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
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<td>• Staff lacked time to use resource with residents one on one</td>
<td>• Trained staff member in life-enrichment department</td>
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<td>• Minimal knowledge amongst nursing staff on providing therapy</td>
<td>• Lots of variety of equipment available</td>
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<td>• Access to room</td>
<td>• Volunteers provide one-to-one programming</td>
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<td>• General awareness of room/equipment</td>
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Creating a Toolkit

- An interdisciplinary task group was established
  - Spiritual Care Advisor
  - 2 Personal Support Workers
  - 2 Volunteer Coordinators
  - Life Enrichment Supervisor
  - 2 Life Enrichment Aides
  - Learning and Professional Practice Coordinator
  - 4 Social work students

Purpose - Toolkit is designed to be a resource to anyone using the MSS therapy equipment

- Provides educational background information
- Provides guidelines on how to facilitate a MSS therapy session
- Describes the MSS therapy equipment
- Explains how to document therapy session
## Snoezelen Weekly Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Resident/Rm #</th>
<th>Residents Reaction In/Out</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Your name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Jane Smith 459</td>
<td><img src="emoji.png" alt="Emojis" /></td>
<td>Resident was upset today and seemed to be restless and exit seeking. Enjoyed light spray and music from the ocean.</td>
<td>Shelley Tallon</td>
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<td>December 25th, 2010 0935</td>
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MSS Therapy Training

- Training was offered to introduce toolkit and demonstrate how to facilitate a MSS therapy session

- Toolkit was pilot tested with a volunteer group known as “the Caring Hearts” – total 6 volunteers

- One hour training sessions were held in the afternoons and in the evenings

- An additional 15 family members, 9 volunteers, 14 staff members completed the training in a one month time period (June 2011)
Evaluation Results

I found this training session helpful

![Bar Chart]

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

I plan to use this room in the future

![Bar Chart]

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Family
Volunteer
Evaluation Results

**I have a clear understanding of how to use the Snoezelen room**

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

**I have a clear understanding of what the purpose is of the Snoezelen room**

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
Evaluation Results

"This is a wonderful way of sharing and interacting with a loved one who now has limited communication abilities! Thank you." -Family member

"I really do hope everyone gets trained to use it so residents and family can take advantage of it." -Family member

"Very excited about having the opportunity to see if it benefits my mother's mental alertness." -Family member

"Definitely a nice option for staff, volunteers, patients/clients." –Volunteer

"This session was an extreme benefit for me, as I come 3X/week for a resident on the 3rd floor. Thank you very much." -Volunteer
Next Steps

- Continue to create awareness on MSS therapy to families especially on admission

- Offer further training opportunities to staff, family members and volunteers

- Develop an interdisciplinary referral process to identify residents that would benefit from MSS therapy

- Use RAI indicators to monitor residents response to the therapy
Conclusion

- LTC homes need to continue to find creative programs to meet the individualized needs of people living with dementia at the end of life

- MSS therapy offers a failure free, individualized experience

- Having family members and volunteers provide MSS therapy benefits their relationship with the resident as much as it benefits the resident’s well-being

For a copy of the toolkit please visit our website: www.palliativealliance.ca
Further Information

Visit our website
www.palliativealliance.ca

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Special Thanks to...