Dementia Care Program and Culture Change

Customer Service Leadership Project
Presented by: Dena Gress

**Introduction**

Grand View Care Center is a 98-bed, non-profit, stand alone skilled nursing facility located in Blair, Wisconsin. We identified the need to create an enhanced dementia care program. Implementing the program involved creating a new culture and way of giving care in the twenty-four-bed memory care unit. The program focuses on the use of Montessori principles, which involves continuous engagement throughout each day based on residents’ personal abilities and interests.

**Knowledge & Objectives**

**Current Knowledge and Research:**
There is a great deal of research on the benefits of using Montessori principles with those who have dementia. Montessori activities involve the teaching of cognitive, social, and functional skills to participants; breaking down tasks into steps that progress from simple to complex. Montessori methods emphasize the fit between the individual’s ability level and the activity. These principles were developed by Maria Montessori and were traditionally used with children; research has shown that use of these principles also improves engagement, enhances mood, and reduces behaviors in those with dementia. A unique aspect of the Montessori activity approach is the ability to modify the activity based on the individual’s physical and cognitive state, as well as, the person’s interests.

**Objectives and Desired Outcomes:**
An overall desired outcome with this program is to better engage residents throughout the day based on their personal needs, interests and abilities. Ultimately we want to provide better, more personalized care and create an enhanced daily living environment for residents.

**Specific Goals:**
- Reduce the use of PRN Pain and PRN psychotropic medications
- Improve activities of daily living (ADL’s) scores
- Reduce behaviors and agitation
- Reduce refusals of care
- Improve sleep
- Reduce the burden of care
- Improve work environment and enjoyment

**Methodology**

Kotter’s change model and the PDCA cycle were used in planning and implementing the dementia care program. Many individuals are resistive to change; it is highly important to plan strategically and implement changes with input from all stakeholders. Then consistently evaluate changes and decisions to continuously improve.

**Methodology Continued**

- Step 1: Acknowledged the need and opportunity for improvement
- Step 2: Researched best practices
- Step 3: Proposed project to management team and gained approval
- Step 4: Formed a diverse leadership project team
- Step 5: Brainstormed and created the project plan
- Step 6: Held an in-service in November 2014 to educate employees on Montessori principles, gain buy-in and create a sense of urgency
- Step 7: Began implementation December 2014
- Step 8: Tracked and analyzed data
- Step 9: Held monthly meetings to evaluate changes, consider feedback and continuously move forward with improvements
- Step 10: Praised staff frequently for their efforts and success
- Step 11: Trained staff based on need (approaching those with dementia and behaviors)

**Highlights**

**Highlights of Changes and Implementation:**
- Implemented a variety of themed stations (daily calendar, Christmas, baking, beauty, and automotive). These stations focus on providing residents the opportunity to reminisce and stimulate the five senses. They can also be adjusted based on residents’ abilities. The stations can be approached and used by residents on their own or by staff and residents together. The Christmas station is depicted below.
- Created “activity idea binders” for each month. These binders provide the memory care unit staff easy access to ideas and resources to carry out continuous engagement.
- An activity calendar specific to the memory care unit was implemented, which provides more structure and holds staff accountable for continuously engaging residents throughout the day.
- Enhanced the memory care unit physical environment based on staff and resident feedback. Some changes included removing excess tables and chairs, providing a piano, adding a Step exercise machine, and reorganizing the sun porch to provide a more private area for residents and visitors.
- Created a better organization system in the activity closet to ensure resources and activities remain organized and easily accessible.

**Summary of Success**

This project has shown significant success. We tracked data on residents living in the memory care unit using MDS’s, our electronic medical record system, and a survey. We compared data from the six months previous of implementing the program to data after implementing the program.

The above graphs show various areas of improve. We also improve the ADL scores on MDS’s by 8.9 percentage points.

**Recommendations**

The project team selected Triana Kret, RN and Rhonda Stephenson, Activity Director to lead the program going forward. I recommend the following to ensure the program carries on and continuously improves.
- Continue holding meetings to plan for continuous success and improvement
- Continue tracking and analyzing data
- Share results and successes at CQI meetings
- Always ask for and consider feedback and suggestions from stakeholders involved
- Expand the program principles to other areas of the facility
- Continue training and educating employees based on expressed need

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