

Using a digital photo frame to disseminate key messages about compassionate caring

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Summary:

Belinda Dewar and Richard Mackay, members of the Leadership in Compassionate Care Project, have developed a novel method to disseminate key messages that effectively engages staff working in a busy ward environment to really think about care.

How it was before:

Communicating new ideas, plans for change and the associated challenges is always easier said than done. Information gets passed on at morning report, via the communication booklet or informally. What the ward was finding was that not everyone was included and people didn't always have the time or motivation to read things. Important issues were coming out of initiatives like patient stories, and we wanted to find ways of communicating them to everyone in a way that meant something, stimulated debate and moved to collective action.

How we did it:

- We pulled out key issues from 25 patient, family and staff stories and turned them into positive statements which we think demonstrate compassionate acts, such as:
- Recognising when staff are feeling a bit low and tired and offering to support them e.g. an opportunity to work with a different group of patients
- Remembering to find out if patients want to say goodbye to fellow patients and staff when they leave the ward
- Saying to patients when you are busy 'I will be back as soon as I can rather than I will be back in a minute'
- We sourced an image that captured the essence of the statement – by linking the words to an image we felt people would remember them better.
- We created a presentation with 58 images and put it into a digital photo frame which was placed at the nurse's station displayed as a continuous loop.
- A cakes and coffee meeting is now held at the nurse's station each day at 11.30. As well as talking about care issues staff are asked to look at the next slide and discuss the statement. In particular the discussion

focuses on, 'what does it make you think when you read the statement?', 'does this happen most of the time on the ward and, if not, how could we make it happen more often?'

How it's improved practice:

- Staff are able to identify with the statements as they have come from their own practice – this makes them more meaningful and perhaps less able to be disputed as something 'somebody else' does.
- The consultants intend to use it in the induction programme for new doctors because they feel it will very quickly 'give them important information about the way things are done around here'.
- It has prompted in depth discussion about caring and helped staff to articulate more clearly the hidden and special aspects of their job, and this makes them feel good about the care they give.
- As people spread the word about compassionate acts they move toward a shared understanding of the events. We have found that this in turn has helped to develop a shared vision for the ward that means something to the staff.

How staff feel about what we have done:

'Having the images is really powerful – the image sticks out in your mind sometimes when you are giving care – like the image of the person in the bath with bubbles – and the statement that you should check out the things they like and are important to them – this sticks with me – it wouldn't take too much for me to put bubbles in a bath or ask a relative what side an unconscious patient likes to lie on. It makes you think which is sometimes quite hard with all the other demands of the job'.

'Some of the statements I am not sure about – but then this is a good thing as it gets us talking about things – we hear everybody's opinions about something that seems so simple like putting makeup on an unconscious patient who was used to wearing makeup – should we do it or not? – the key thing that keeps coming up is it's not what we would want, it's what the patient would want and they are all individual'



Further Information

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