

Sensory Therapeutic Enhancement Project (STEP)

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Alberta Health Services, North Zone

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This project is an opportunity for care teams, residents, and families to access therapeutic and sensory activities to facilitate client-centered care planning and interventions in support of safe and enriching care settings by meeting residents' social, psychological, cognitive, emotional, and recreational needs. Continuing care (CC) staff, family members, volunteers and others are supported in comfortable resident engagement. This project will make available a variety of therapeutic items (sensory tools, resources and activities) for North Zone residents with dementia that will support person-centered care planning and aim to address some of the behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

The project objective is to catalyze best practice implementation by facilitating NZ Continuing Care, care teams in evidence-based use of sensory tools and therapeutic activities in care interventions for persons living with dementia. This aligns with AHS Strategic Priorities in addressing the needs of persons living with dementia residing in facilities, lean on Pain & Mood and AUA strategic best practice to equip teams with tools to address behavioral and sensory needs, address pain, lift mood, address falls (de-prescribing), and help create safe, calmer environments. Equip CC settings across the NZ (staff, & families) to improve and/or maintain quality of life (QOL) of those persons with dementia. This requires an endorsement of client/family as members of IDCT and supports person/family-centered care planning as key practices toward positively impacting client wellness, mood, social experiences, and QOL and building sustainability.

Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD) will be addressed, in part, with improved access to meaningful sensory activity and experience. Sites will have ready access to therapeutic items/resources as part of care plan when challenging BPSD exist. Through ease of access to specialized and evidence-informed sensory and activity items we expect to improve quality of life (QOL), stimulate cognition, and improve wellness for PWD. This lends to two project sub-objectives focusing on item procurement and availability:

1. Collaborate with NZ Continuing Care sites/care teams to identify and procure resident-specific therapeutic items for resident use.
2. Develop a NZ Lending Library of specialty sensory items and activities that can be temporarily used with residents for trial before purchase.

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This project will be an opportunity for care teams, residents and families to access therapeutic and sensory activities to facilitate client centred care planning and interventions in support of safe and enriching care settings where social, psychological, cognitive, emotional, and recreational care needs can be met, and where family members are comfortable and engaged in meaningful ways. Quality Care outcomes related to AUA, Pain & Mood, and Restraint use, will be monitored as will more individualized or smaller scale qualitative data. IDCT staff become more aware and comfortable with use of sensory stimulation activities, helping to decrease and manage behaviours in PWD.