

AHS North Zone – Sensory Therapeutic Enhancement Project (STEP) Final Report

Executive Summary

The Sensory Therapeutic Enhancement Project (STEP) is a North Zone (NZ) Seniors Health project which is supported by Allied Health and Seniors Health staff. Through this project, engagement and sensory activity items were made available for North Zone residents with dementia. The project supported person-centered care planning and aimed to address behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD). Through ease of access to quality of engagement and sensory activity items, results expected included improved quality of life, stimulated cognition, and improved wellness for Persons Living with Dementia (PLWD).

Objectives/Implementation

Objectives:

1. NZ Continuing Care (CC) frontline staff are provided evidence and best practice resources to support the use of engagement and sensory activity items for use with PLWD.
2. NZ CC teams provide input to identify and procure resident-specific engagement and sensory activity items for resident use.
3. Development of NZ Lending Cupboards of sensory activity items to be utilized for sensory engagement.
4. Development of a sensory resource manual to support frontline NZ staff to enhance sensory practice.
5. Development of a Community of Practice (COP) to bring care teams together to share learned experiences, network and support one another.

Process/ Approach:

1. The STEP committee was established and encompassed members of Allied Health and Seniors Health staff from the NZ. This committee met weekly throughout the duration of the grant, collaborating on decisions to determine the best approaches for sites to provide sensory practice for PLWD.
2. Liaised with NZ CC sites to gauge interest and needs related to sensory practice, offering an opportunity to express interest to participate in enhancing the use of sensory activity items for PLWD.
3. Purchased sensory activity items for NZ sites based on expression of interest.
4. Agreements were put in place that those sites who received sensory activity items through STEP were required to report on the effectiveness of implementation.
5. Collaborated with the Complex Care Support Team (CCST) to identify locations, sensory activity items required, and process for lending to support four NZ Lending Cupboards. Compiled research, resources and tools to support frontline staff, leading to the creation of the Sensory Resource Manual.
6. Offered monthly COP sessions for those involved with STEP to share their experiences and learn from others. As a result of the positive feedback, the COP will continue.
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Impact

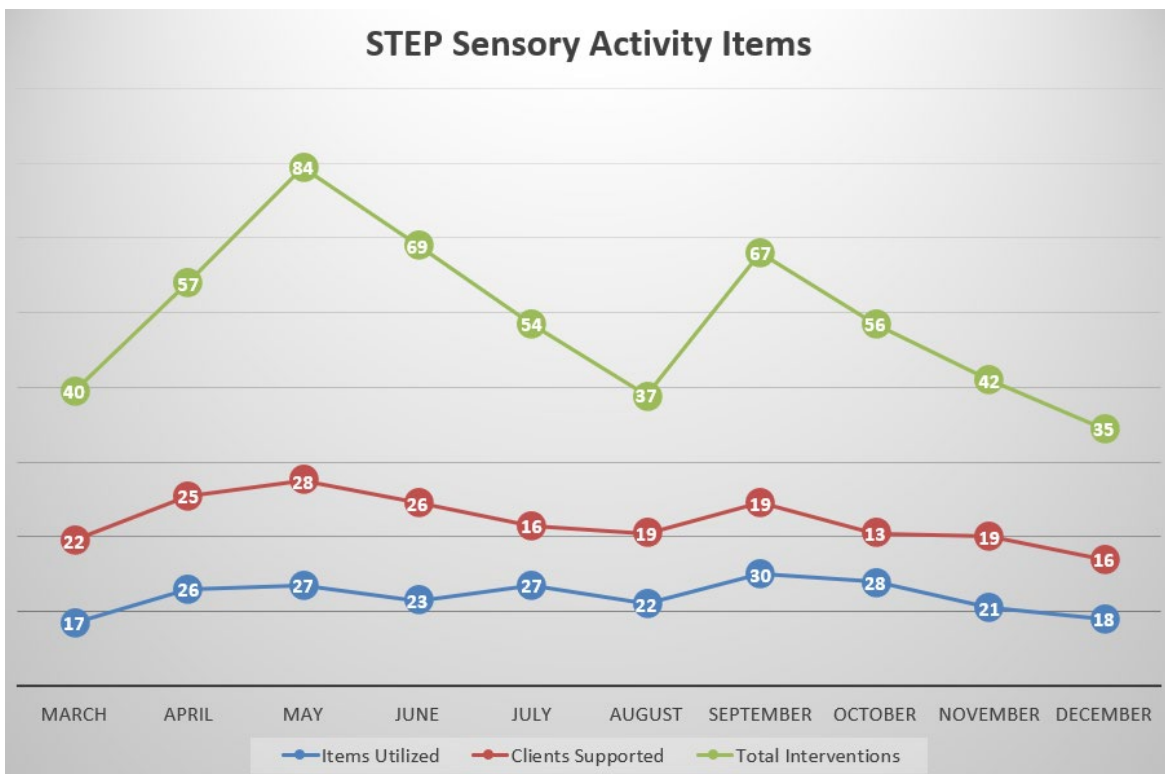
NZ CC sites that had sensory activity items purchased for them through STEP were required to report on the following key points monthly from March to December 2022:

- The number of sensory items utilized at their site.
- The number of clients supported through sensory engagement.
- The total number of interventions completed.

Key Highlights:

- Ten continuing care sites in addition to four lending cupboards received sensory activity items through the STEP and the data is included above.
- Average number of Items utilized per month = 24
- Average number of clients supported each month = 20
- Average number of interventions completed per month = 54

Situations impacting final numbers include outbreaks, staffing vacancy, vacations and competing priorities.



Environment:

The target audience for this project were North Zone CC Residents with dementia and those supported by the North Zone CCST. In addition to resources to support the residents, NZ frontline staff also greatly benefited from this project through knowledge, resources and networking.

Sustainability:

1. Sensory activity items remain at the sites that received sensory activity items, to continue to provide sensory engagement for PLWD.

2. Lending Cupboards will continue to be supported by the NZ CCST on an ongoing basis and items within will continue to be loaned to NZ sites for sensory engagement for PLWD.
3. NZ Seniors Health SharePoint Page → Dementia Care folder houses the Sensory Resource Manual, Lending Cupboard Resources, tutorials, and various other resources.
4. The 140-page Sensory Resource Manual will continue to be available and updated.
5. The sensory COP will be held bimonthly moving forward and continue to be supported by NZ Allied Health and Seniors Health. The COP membership will expand to include any NZ staff interested in sensory practice.