

# BRINGING PURPOSE TO EACH DAY

## Background

In Canaan Ward, we strive to provide each patient with the most positive and individualised hospital experience, through delivery of care that is underpinned by a values-led, evidence based approach.

We believe that purpose should be provided to each persons' day to ensure distress is minimised and activities of daily living are maintained. This ethos of care is implemented from admission to discharge.

## Problem

We identified that several gentlemen had required readmission to Canaan Ward, due to their needs not being met effectively, following discharge. We wondered if this could be addressed by devising a simple way to teach new care providers how to interpret subtle changes in behaviour, thus, enhancing communication and allowing for provision of proactive support and utilisation of appropriate and effective approaches. This led to the implementation of the Traffic Light System in dementia care.

## Intervention

The Newcastle Model of understanding behaviours that challenge allows our team of healthcare professionals to visualise how each patient is experiencing their unique journey with dementia; this is conducive to the development and implementation of personalised support strategies, which aim to fulfil our patients' needs holistically, whilst enhancing the dignified and compassionate way in which we deliver care.

Coordinated care planning is essential in our work and we aim to ensure that the Alzheimer's Scotland 8 Pillars Model is reflected throughout each set of individualised care and treatment plans. The care plans that are implemented during an admission, provide staff with all the necessary information to complete the Traffic Light System, prior to discharge.

## Strategy for change

Throughout an admission, a Dementia Coordinator (Key Nurse) will support a patient and their caregivers, alongside our multi-disciplinary team. Establishing therapeutic relationships and encouraging patient and caregiver involvement, in the development and review of care and treatment plans, is central to this role. This also allows for effective future planning and proactive delivery of difficult conversations, before an adverse situation arises, thus, reducing carer stress.

Canaan Ward believe that in order to be an expert, you should be given the skills to become an expert; the multi-disciplinary team have, therefore, undertaken the Stress and Distress course (Newcastle model of understanding behaviours that challenge) to ensure they have a true understanding of what causes distress for people with dementia. The team have also attended courses to update their clinical skills; this has improved their knowledge and enhanced their ability to provide effective care.

## The Traffic Light System

	Green	Yellow	Red
PRESENTATION/ BEHAVIOURS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facial expression is happy/relaxed</li> <li>Dancing</li> <li>Whistling</li> <li>Appears curious as to what is going on around him</li> <li>Seeks engagement and conversation with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facial expression is worried</li> <li>Furrowed brows</li> <li>May self-isolate and begin to wander alone</li> <li>May appear to be confused or lost in thought</li> <li>Speech may quicken and become more difficult to interpret</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facial expression is frightened or frustrated</li> <li>Face flushed</li> <li>Becoming intrusive around others</li> <li>Shouting</li> <li>Kicking out</li> <li>Raising fists</li> </ul>
PROACTIVE DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that John is provided with opportunity to engage in a variety of activities – musical, dance or sports based</li> <li>Provide John with opportunities for social interaction</li> <li>Support John to spend time outdoors</li> <li>Maintain a calm environment, free from excessive disruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach John in a calm manner, using a soft tone of voice if possible</li> <li>Give John time and patience to express himself, complete tasks at his pace</li> <li>Encourage John to utilise a quieter space – stay with him to provide reassurance</li> <li>Provide distraction in the form of preferred activities, such as music or dance, and engaging in 1:1 conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a calm approach</li> <li>Direct John away from the situation or person causing him distress</li> <li>Give instructions that are simple and direct</li> <li>Refer to "POTENTIAL STRESSORS/TRIGGERS" to aid identification of any unmet needs</li> </ul>
REACTIVE STRATEGIES	If the above strategies are unsuccessful in minimising severe distress, John is prescribed medication to reduce agitation and anxiety. This is on an as required basis and should only be considered as a last resort, in line with the least restrictive principles set out in the Mental Health Act. He is generally amenable to accepting this medication orally, with verbal prompting and assistance from nursing staff. After administration, staff should monitor for effects and continue to implement proactive de-escalation strategies.		

## Measurement of improvement

This feedback was gathered from patients, carers and staff members in care homes and other wards in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital:

**"Informative and comprehensive"**

"Canaan Ward share their knowledge and expertise through the traffic light system. This comprehensive guide provides confidence to staff and promotes a successful transfer"

"The implementation of the traffic light system has reduced revolving door admissions to Canaan Ward."

"I have cherished the fact that I can still enjoy my life with my wife, despite being in hospital"

"There are no limits to Canaan ward's capabilities."

## Effects of change

Effective implementation of person-centred care allows for the introduction of therapeutic activities that bring a purpose to each day. We believe that a patient and their caregivers should be provided with opportunities to engage in normal, yet meaningful activities such as afternoon tea in our Dementia Cafe; discos; trips to the cinema and musical performances.

Establishing activities that enrich the lives of our patients and sharing this information, alongside the Traffic Light System, has aided in facilitating successful discharges, whilst significantly improving relationships between health and social care settings.

## Lessons learnt and message for others

***We are committed to looking beyond an individual's cognitive impairment, ensuring that our patients are supported to achieve their full potential; our coordinated approach to care allows our gentlemen to resume their role of a husband, dad, brother or granddad, creating cherished memories for all involved. Canaan Ward demonstrate true compassion and expertise to deliver a high standard of care to patient's living with dementia***