

Using a valid Measure to Support a Policy and Practice change towards Sexual Expressions of the Elderly living in the Long Term Care Facility

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Background

Review of the Literature

- Everyone regardless of age needs love, touch companionship and intimacy.
- The literature indicates that the elderly living in Long Term Care Facilities often have their interest of sexuality overlooked.
- Many staff members have only a vague understanding of the sexual needs of the elderly and therefore consider their expressions a behavior problem (Hajar & Kamel, 2003).
- Long Term care facilities have the responsibility to be able to manage the sexual needs of the residents consistently and fairly while protecting their rights and that of the staff (Gott, 2005).
- With an aging America and an increasing number of elderly individuals moving into Long Term Care facilities, it is important to consider their need for self-determination.
- The wide spread stereotype that sexuality is unimportant or irrelevant in older people needs to be dispelled.
- Heterosexuality continues to be the norm in aged care but older gay, lesbians, trans-gender, and intersex people often face significant disparities (Tolley & Ranzijn, 2006).
- Society continues to view sexuality in the elderly as a taboo subject ,and updated research is limited.
- There was no policy at JJP to guide caregivers without the instillation of their own beliefs and judgment.
- Thus, the need for a culture transformation at JJP among care givers (nurses) through education and policy development and implementation.

Statement of Need

- Residents living in the CLC should be afforded the right to privacy, dignity and self-determination regarding their expressions of sexuality in a Patient Centered environment without fear of reprisal.

Methods/Procedures

- Development of a policy to address the sexual expressions of the elderly living in the Long Term Care Facility.
- Use of the Aging Sexuality Knowledge and Attitude Scale (ASKAS) as the needs assessment tool.
- All care givers in the Long Term Care Facility were given a pre and post-test using this ASKAS tool (White, 2002).
- The tool has proven validity with a Cronbachs alpha of >0.87.
- The education highlighted Aged sexuality, rights, privacy and dignity of the residents.
- The questionnaires were then hand scored and analyzed using SPSS-21 software.

Outcomes/Results

- Prior to the education a pretest was given, 70 questionnaires were given to staff. 48 questionnaires were returned 13 were eliminated due to incompleteness
- The remaining N=35 had a mean of 22.80 and post education with a mean of 27.61 post, $df= 30.709$, $t=3.7609$, $p\text{-value}= 0.0007142^{***}$
- After the education there was statistically significant increase in knowledge of the caregivers .
- The policy was developed to guide the practice change.
- The care givers understood the needs of the elderly with regards to their sexual expressions and were more sensitive providing them the necessary privacy.

Lessons Learned

- Short term Education and clear guidelines such as a Facility Policy can resolve gaps in knowledge and solidify a change in Practice.
- Education was needed to assist the caregivers with building confidence to address the elderly patients concerns.

References

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