



Namaste Care Programme

We all know people living with advanced dementia can become increasingly 'silent and invisible' in our busy care setting. Something we have noted and wish to stop. To minimise the risk of this happening in Abbeyfield house, we have decided to trial a new model of care. This care is known as Namaste care in which I have recently attended a 4-day course on and very enthusiastic about. This type of care can make such a difference to the quality of life of our residents, families and also staffs job satisfaction.

Namaste is an Indian greeting and means 'I see and honour the spirit in you'. This means to see the person who is still there but living with end stage dementia, when no longer able to voice or physically express themselves. This programme has been developed to allow people to continue to live with a quality of life and not just exist. I do not think that assisting someone to wash, dress, eat and all other aspects of care is living this is merely existing. People need to be engaged in meaningful activities, they need to feel wanted, loved, to feel as if they still can contribute.

The care that will be provided within the Namaste care room is not anything new and anything we don't already carry out within Abbeyfield at sporadic times however it brings it altogether and ensures that the care is given more frequently, which has shown to improve quality of life. This care will take place simply in a room, we will use the lounge at the bottom of the extension at present. This room will be made a beautiful physical and relaxational space. Soft music playing in the background of the room, scented with an air diffuser often lavender as this is known to help people relax. Residents will be positioned for maximum comfort, out of their usual chairs with pillows, blankets and soft socks. They will be surrounded with memories of their lives, favourite things and things which are meaningful to them as a person, photos, and for example a scarf with their husband's aftershave etc. these will be placed in front of them in sight. The room will also be decorated to which season we are in to orientate residents to this, for example at Christmas time we hope to display Christmas plants, decorations will be up and the room may have scents associated with Christmas i.e. cinnamon, crisp snow scent, etc and for spring would be daffodils, spring scents etc.

We would run this Mon Wed Fri from approx. 10—3pm each day. In the morning, Simple activities will be offered in a slow and deliberate way. Activities will include a slow and gentle hand rub, a foot soak etc. Namaste Care is based on the power of loving touch and is in fact, very powerful. Also included will be old-fashioned shaves for the men, sips of their favourite

drinks and favourite snacks to treat not only for extra calories, hearing a poem being read aloud etc. All conversation would be guided by them and their lives, chatting about their families or hobbies etc. In the afternoon, may be more upbeat, favourite songs, films will be played. This will also include any family members who wish to be involved with this. So as I said before this is nothing we don't already carry out however it is care that is not time restricted by the busy home and the carer can give their whole attention to this small group of residents.

One of the most important things is the intentional, kind and focussed attention of the Namaste carer who will be in this room with the residents on these days. I have asked for volunteers for this as this as this type of care wont suit everybody and we would like staff to want to be there as this is a major part in this being successful.

The same group of people will be welcomed into the Namaste programme day after day. In this way, they become a peaceful little community where there is a continuous calm presence of others. I have heard positive feedback from homes that have started this programme such as a resident who had stopped having conversations with family members. Feedback from their family stated they had told them they loved them something they had not heard for a very long time. And one other lady who had not spoken for a long time, with her husband by her side every day, after a few months of namaste was singing their wedding song to her husband, this will be a lasting memory now for him. These experiences show for me the importance of this and the need for meaningful activities for people with dementia.

Within this programme, there is also focus on promoting quality right to the end of life, these simple things can be brought into the residents own personal space when the time comes that they may no longer be able to come into the room or for those who haven't been involved in the room.

Other homes in which have offered Namaste care showed that offering this care has helped staff and family members to comfort and connect with people who were living with advanced dementia in a deep and meaningful way.

As I brushed upon earlier this care can only be offered to residents with advanced dementia as those are the ones who would benefit the most.

If your family member will be involved in this I will speak with you directly for more information. If anyone would like more information, can come to myself and also, it's an interesting read online, search Namaste care and will give further information on this.