

Spare Tyre

Once upon a time programme

Spare Tyre developed and delivered a multi-sensory interactive storytelling project for care home residents with late stage dementia which also served as a development activity for residential care home staff. The training aimed to support staff to offer the sorts of activities that Spare Tyre had been delivering.

Background

Spare Tyre is a participatory arts charity which works with marginalised groups (including older people and people with learning disabilities). With the Workforce Development Innovation Fund support, Spare Tyre developed and delivered a multi-sensory interactive storytelling project for people with late stage dementia. The design was based on the learning from similar programmes delivered to other groups. This short film provides an example of their work.

The programme aimed to provide an innovative training experience for the residential care home workforce – providing a new type of training product which focused on supporting staff to provide the people they care for with multi-sensory activities in future.

What we wanted to achieve

Spare Tyre aimed to develop a new activity workshop for care home residents with late stage dementia and link this to a training activity for staff. The key objective was to provide a multi-sensory activity for residents thereby improving the care delivered to this group, who often have few opportunities like this.

By involving staff in the delivery of the activity, Spare Tyre aims to ensure that they can continue to put the new ideas / methods into practice at the end of the programme. As noted by a training lead at one of the participating care homes: “Linking training with practice is a difficult thing to achieve” – this programme was seen as a good example of how this link can be achieved.

“ Staff don't see this as training... and when they don't see it as training, knowledge and skills stick... it makes it real, it makes it alive and they feel that they can do some of this stuff ”

Activities coordinator

What we did

Spare Tyre developed a new storytelling programme for delivery with care home residents; this required several weeks of rehearsal and preparation. The story is delivered in one hour-long workshops with residents, each taking part in two workshops.

During the weeklong 'residency', there are also two days of staff and volunteer training with up to 16 individuals. Staff are also encouraged to be involved in an interactive learning session with residents to try out the tools and techniques they have learned. This activity was delivered in six care homes in the south east and London.

What we achieved

An independent evaluation was undertaken which examined the impact of the project on staff and residents; the findings have been used here. The activity was reported to have engaged the residents effectively; most residents were able to sustain interest and actively take part in the multi-sensory aspects (such as voicing along with the music). Staff noted that many of the 80 residents taking part were normally quite isolated and did not take part in activities due to their condition. Engaging them in this sort of activity was therefore seen as effective practice.

For the 76 staff that took part the main benefit reported was that it engaged them in training which could easily be adapted into practice. As a result, staff reported that after Spare Tyre had completed their visit, they continued to offer similar

multi-sensory activities. Other comments from staff about the impact of the training on their skills included: "[The training] got me to understand the technique – colours, smells, objects"; and, "It brought out in me the need to communicate at the resident level and be person-centred."

What we learnt

A key question for Spare Tyre is whether they should work to accredit the training they developed. Three-quarters of trainees responded that gaining credit for a recognised qualification was 'very important'. However Spare Tyre noted that gaining an accreditation for the training would be quite costly; it might also reduce the flexibility they require for delivering an innovative programme of this sort.

It was also reported by the independent evaluator and the grant-holder that ensuring that the care home management has 'bought-in' to the project is crucial to its success. In some instances it was found that the homes were not fully prepared for the arrival of Spare Tyre, or that staff were not encouraged to take part.

The grant holders noted that "For the care industry to recognise the benefit of creative activity in person-centred care for people with dementia requires a long-term culture change". This sort of project is seen by those who delivered it, and those who benefited as contributing to this change.

“All the indicators consistently show that the Once Upon a Time programme is making a significant impact on the care homes... Staff are positive about attending the training sessions and residents are responding well to the opportunity to attend their workshops”

Evaluation team



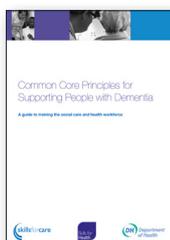
For more information please contact

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Skills for Care Recommends

From activity provision and dementia qualifications to associated guidance, Skills for Care produces various resources to strengthen care worker skills and enable better care provision.

Common core principles for supporting people with dementia



We have produced a guide which supports the social care and health workforce to care for people with dementia. Employers should use the principles as part of their development plans to improve the experience of those with dementia and their carers.

<http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Skills/Dementia/Dementia.aspx>

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