



Modernisation Agency
Clinical Governance Support Team

Eureka

Don't assume you know!

Making sure that patients and carers influence the Stroke
Services at the Bedford Hospital NHS Trust

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How it was

- Stroke services in the hospital had not been a major priority. Although a 'stroke unit' had been created in response to guidelines produced by the Royal College of Physicians in 1998, it was in effect, simply a physical entity. There was no coherent stroke team.
- Patients were involved in day to day decisions about their care, but there was no routine way of seeking patient or carer views on the service.
- A group of colleagues from the stroke unit decided to join the CGST's programme 'Supporting Stroke Services' in March 2001 as they looked for ways to improve their service and raise its profile locally.

How they did it

- As part of their service review the team invited views from a wide cross section of patients and carers, through questionnaires, interviews and workshops.
- Seeking patients' views (about services) was a new experience for the members of the review team.
- The team was surprised by the issues raised by patients and carers. They had expected patients to be concerned about the same things as staff.
- Most significantly, the team found that there were real concerns from patients about the decorative state of the day room – which had not been a serious issue for staff. Other issues of concern were about privacy and dignity at night, information and day to day care plans.

How it's improved

- While many of the issues raised by patients have been tackled, resources for the redecoration of the day room have not yet been secured despite much effort on the part of the team. They are enthusiastic to use the skills of a member of staff in the work: she is a colour therapist.
- Following a hospital initiative to recruit more volunteers, the unit has been able to increase the number helping with activities such as feeding at meal times and diversional therapy.
- One positive impact of the project has been the recruitment of more volunteers who are helping out with a range of activities on the unit.
- The work to involve patients has provided the team with valuable experience. Staff now try to see things through the patients' eyes. As one member of the team said: "*We did not expect the strength of feeling about the day room*".
- Overall, the team are better at dealing with comments and issues raised by patients 'in the moment' rather than putting them off and setting up meetings or suggesting more formal routes.
- Finally, the team has learnt that those projects that initially seem to be the easy ones are not necessarily so - even when relatively small amounts of money are involved!

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