

VP Complex Care Newsletter

A cost effective alternative to Nursing or Residential care

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives"

- *William.A.Foster in Igniting the Spirit at Work: Daily Reflections.*

VP Complex Care have raised £450 and donated to Children in Need and MacMillan

With the help of our clients and staff we have hosted two successful events to raise much needed funds to for two amazing charities. Our clients have been involved every step of the way with some creating artwork, some



helping with baking cakes and others helping us to manage the activities of the day.

Thank you to all who attended & donated not only their money but their time.



At VP we are always keen to ensure that our staff and clients receive the support they need. Throughout this edition of our newsletter we aim to show you some of the ways we achieve this and demonstrate how our practice separates us as a leading nationwide provider of excellent care.

Take care of the staff and they will take care of the clients

By Lucy Evans

Good support staff are the backbone of any care organisation. The vital role they play means it is imperative that we take the time to ensure that they receive the support they need. In the world of complex care, stress can be overwhelming if not managed effectively. Certainly for our teams of support staff it is important that we encourage effective stress management to reduce the impact that a client's day-to-day needs can have on them. Mindfulness can be practiced by ANYONE and can have a positive impact on one's personal and professional life. Mindfulness helps us to gain distance

from our emotions and thoughts by staying in the moment and seeing them for what they are - simply thoughts and feelings; promoting the idea that everything is neutral until we think about it and judge it. Doing this allows us to see that we don't always have to react to our thoughts and feelings. We simply need to be aware of them and understand how they influence our behaviour, and more broadly, our personal and professional lives. You don't need a special set of skills to be able to practice mindfulness, just an open mind, an open heart and willingness to step out of your own comfort zone.

How is it done?

TIME. It is important you set aside some time each day to practice mindfulness. Take 5-10 minutes away from watching that TV programme, or scrolling through your phone, and invest some time for yourself.

BE IN THE MOMENT. To be mindful, you need to be present - in the moment, and not focusing on anything other than what is going on right now. Inevitably our minds want to drift. It can help to focus on some object in the environment to anchor your attention or focus on the

sounds around you. Whatever you use pay full attention to it, the way it looks, it's shape, it's texture, it's colour etc.

BE AWARE. Be aware of your mind wanting to wander. Just notice it, don't judge it. Gently bring it back to the present moment and the focus of your attention - your object or sounds.

Mindfulness takes practice but is great for our mental health. It gives us the ability to understand how we think and feel, and helps us to manage stressful experiences. Mindfulness can help to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. There are many different articles, videos, books and documentaries out now that promote Mindfulness and will help you learn more, as well as incorporate it into your everyday life.

Here at VP complex care we promote reflective practice in all its forms including mindfulness. Our support teams are encouraged to do this independently and are guided in supervision to reflect on their work, their thoughts and their feelings. Through the process of being mindful we can develop professionally to ensure that we are able to provide the best possible support for our clients.

Is enough being done to manage behaviours that challenge without resorting to medication?

By Danielle North

STOMP: Stopping the Over-Medication of People is a campaign encouraging alternatives to the use of medication to support those with needs including Brain Injury, mental health needs, Learning disability and Autism.

The NHS campaign has pledged to reduce the number of people being given psychotropic medication to manage their behaviours. In England alone, it is estimated that between 30,000 and 35,000 people are prescribed psychotropic medication without any significant clinical justification. It is believed that this is done in an attempt to manage and control challenging behaviours. Psychotropic medication can result in changes in a person's presentation, including loss of ability related to everyday skills and tasks. It can alter people's perceptions, mood and consciousness with long-term use putting people at unnecessary risk of a wide range of side effects, including weight gain, organ failure and in some cases, premature death. The latter is the most extreme consequence, but it highlights the importance of practising care that is enabling, enhancing a person's abilities and quality of life.

The aim of psychotropic medication should only ever be to improve the person's quality of life, but is enough being done to promote alternatives to this medication?

There is a long history of over medicating people, for example, Winterbourne View where patients were prescribed psychotropic medication with no diagnosis to support the need. For the victims of Winterbourne, all were moved to alternative supported environments and have flourished with support that is centred on supporting development rather than suppressing behaviours. It has never been as important as it is now to ensure that when medication is prescribed it is *'safe, appropriate, proportionate and in partnership with other interventions.'*

According to NICE guidelines, antipsychotic medicines should only ever be used to manage challenging behaviours if:

- Psychological or other interventions alone do not produce change within an agreed time or
- Treatment for any coexisting mental or physical health problem has not led to a reduction in the behaviour or
- The risk to the person or others is very severe (for example, because of violence, aggression or self-injury).

We at VP recognise that we ALL have a responsibility to ensure that we explore and use alternative methods to supporting the development of clients who have behaviours that challenge. As a result, VP Forensic has signed the STOMP pledge and we promise to act in the best interests of the people we support at all times. We agree with Dave Gerrard of the STOMP programme who states:

"...STOMP is everyone's business and should become part of the everyday working agenda."

We take our role seriously as a healthcare service provider and want to take steps to ensure overmedication does not occur within our service. This includes exploring how we can support people to improve their quality of life by using alternative methods to medication.

So how do we do this?

As with all of our working practices, we start with our clients. We encourage involvement and work towards our clients having a better understanding of their medication. We combine this with the work we do with our clients to understand their behaviours and successfully develop self-management strategies.

We encourage client's families, friends or carers to be involved in every decisions about the use of medication. Each of these people have a great understanding of our client's likes / dislikes / wants / needs and their input is invaluable. With their help we can develop an in-depth knowledge of how to effectively support our clients without the unnecessary use of medication.

We encourage clients to attend regular medication reviews and liaise with the GP and MDT to monitor the use of psychotropic medication. We carry out monthly audits and disseminate information of usage so this can be continuously monitored by the MDT routinely and not just at review meetings.

We follow MDT guidance and create person centred care plans, risk assessments and protocols' detailing what medication is

prescribed, and develop step by step guidance on what support is required to support clients with the administration of their medication.

We train our staff to understand medication and how to safely support our clients with the administration of their medication, providing them with information on its main uses and side effects. Our staff are the eyes and ears of our service and with their reports we can monitor the usage of psychotropic medication on a regular basis to ensure medication is only used when necessary. We audit MAR charts enabling us to identify if clients are experiencing heightened anxieties and challenging behaviours, patterns can then be identified and the right input from relevant healthcare professionals can be sourced in order to put in place alternative methods to manage complex behaviours.

We competency assess our staff by visiting our clients and completing direct observations of medication being managed by the staff. This gives us the reassurance that our staff understand medication and how it should be used.

We recruit staff that share our ethos. It is only with the right attitude on the ground that we will be successful in upholding the standards we strive to maintain.

Where psychotropic medication is required, the end goal for any of our clients is always to reduce the medication, enabling our clients to live a good quality of life without the need for chemical restraint. We work closely with the client, families, and the MDT to make appropriate plans to reduce medication, encouraging clients to live independently without the need for medication where possible.

To support the campaign and sign the pledge visit https://www.vodg.org.uk/campaigns/stomp_campaign/

If you have any queries regarding the development of a proactive person centred support package, you can contact us on 08708504265 or community@vpfn.co.uk



VP Complex Care appoint Dignity Champions!

Samantha Harper and Danielle North are our two Dignity Champions here at VP Complex Care and both are very passionate about making even the smallest of changes to provide a good quality service to all of our clients. We would like to encourage all of you to share your ideas with us on how we can improve our service in order to benefit our clients and promote their dignity.

You can contact us on:
08708504265 Or via email to
samantha.harper@vpfn.co.uk
Danielle.north@vpfn.co.uk

Become a Dignity Champion?

Are you someone who is passionate about treating others with dignity? Do you believe that care services must be compassionate, person centred and efficient? Would you pledge to challenge poor care, act as a good role model, educate and inform those working around you?

If Yes, you can sign up to become a Dignity Champion by going on to their website:
<https://www.dignityincare.org.uk/>



Meet the Meerkats Round 2!

After the massive success last year our Director has decided to run the meet the meerkat event again this year and we have now added a Falconry Experience. Watch our social media accounts on 15th May to see the updates and pictures as the meerkats bring a little fun and laughter for our clients.



Thanking our team and appreciating our support workers

In the world of healthcare it is vital that those on the ground supporting our clients are encouraged to fulfill their role to a high standard.

What better way to do this than thank those that do?

Over the recent months our Director, Phil Walters, has recognised the hard work of the efforts of some of our most dedicated staff.

Bertha Hungwe, Samantha Hearne, Andrew Richards, Toni Saxton, Deborah Furlong, Sarah Clay, Mark Ainsworth and Sharon Hallam have all received a gift of their choice as a thank you.

Phil has always been instrumental for recognising the team and the dedication that they have shown. We look forward to selecting staff in the future and welcome the feedback from our clients.

If you would like to provide feedback about any of our team you can email samantha.harper@vpfn.co.uk who will always ensure that we are acting on the feedback we have. Alternatively you can call us on 08708504265.

Supporting clients whilst battling the elements.

When the winter weather closes in we all hear of closures of schools and businesses. In healthcare this can have devastating consequences for clients and their families.

We are proud to announce that during the recent period of challenging winter weather **we have successfully supported 100% of the support hours we are commissioned for.**

We achieved this through the dedication of an amazing team and the determination to make sure our client's needs are met. Our staff teams have ensured that ALL of our clients have received support.

Thank you to our amazing team. We are so very grateful for all of your hard work and commitment.

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

We provide support with:

- Developing/regaining skills
- Anxiety
- Depression & self-esteem
- Relationships
- Physical health & disability
- Post-traumatic stress
- Anger management
- Behavioural difficulties
- Carer distress
- Grief & loss
- Cognitive difficulties
- Physical & sexual abuse
- Eating disorders



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VP Complex Care

Nationwide providers of specialist
community care and rehabilitation

For any queries relating to setting
up any support package please do
not hesitate to contact us via email
with your referral.

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