

Developing Star Wards in Bedfordshire: *tweaking, turning and transforming local acute mental health care*

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Practice Development

Introduction

Following a short presentation at the Eastern Region's CSIP Acute Care Steering Group in May 2007, Marion Janner invited local services (wards) to join the motivational Star Wards network which captures and promotes the sharing of good practices that make best use of the time and skills of both staff and patients. Inspired by Marion's presentation, it was agreed that the Trust's three working age acute in-patient wards (*Oakley Court in Luton, Townsend Court in Dunstable & Keats Ward in Bedford*) would join the network, which offered an opportunity to attend the first Star Wards Conference – the Momentum Meeting in July 2007, and access to the fortnightly network newsletter.

Planning

Following a discussion at the Trust's Acute Care Forum Sub-Group (*Bedfordshire & Luton Mental Health & Social Care Partnership NHS Trust*), it was agreed to take a closer look through the practical Star Wards resource (Janner 2006) and to develop a local benchmarking audit tool in capturing good practice for each of the Trust's three working age acute in-patient wards. The group firmly believed that many of the ideas encapsulated in the Star Wards resource were already being implemented, but that there were other ideas which would have particular merit in advancing local practice. There was also a belief that there were additional good practices that were already being implemented which were not mentioned within the Star Wards resource.

Methodology

Following a review of accessible benchmarking tools from other areas, a local benchmarking tool was developed, which incorporated the various 75 good practice ideas from the Star Wards resource, grouped into seven key areas, and an additional 27 ideas that were based upon local ideas and standards or recommendations from other sources (Healthcare Commission (HCC) 2007, Pereira & Woollaston 2007, CSIP 2007) or recognised as existing good practices.

A time was planned with each Unit / Ward Manager to work through the benchmarking tool in identifying areas of existing good practice, Star Wards practice ideas which had particular merit to the Unit, and areas for focused action. Each practice idea was therefore graded using a simple traffic light scale:

- GREEN = fully achieved;
- AMBER = partially achieved OR implementation planned;
- RED = not achieved and no plan for implementation OR not considered applicable.

Findings

This local base-line benchmarking exercise has shown that each Unit / Ward is already implementing a significant number of positive practices, as highlighted in Tables 1 & 2.

Table 1: Baseline Benchmark of Star Wards Positive Practice Ideas

Grading of Practice Ideas	Unit 1 % (no. of items)	Unit 2 % (no. of items)	Unit 3 % (no. of items)
GREEN	43% (44)	59% (60)	44% (45)
AMBER	46% (47)	30% (31)	41% (42)
RED	11% (11)	11% (11)	15% (15)

Table 2: Excerpt from Baseline Benchmark – section on physical health and activity

Description of Practice Idea	Link to Guidance	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Physical Health & Activity				
Ward has an exercise bike and/or treadmill	Star 16; HCC	A	G	R
Patients can meet individually with Pharmacist and Dietician	Star 17; HCC	A	G	G
Walking Groups	Star 18; HCC	G	G	A
Half an hour exercise daily, led by suitably trained person	Star 19; HCC	A	A	G
Advice available on healthy eating and smoking cessation	Star 20; HCC	G	G	G
Ward has a gardening / grow your own group	adapted Star 21; HCC	A	G	R
A health promotion / fitness instructor runs group / individual exercises	Star 22; HCC	A	A	A
All patients who want one, leave hospital with a community exercise plan	Star 23; HCC	A	A	A
Optional physical health checks are completed (physical exam, blood testing, ECG (if risk factors), lifestyle assessment (diet, BMI, smoking, exercise), allergies, physical observation, other investigations (if needed)	Star 24; HCC	G	G	G
Access to sports facilities and activities (e.g. badminton, table tennis, use of local leisure centres)	HCC	G	G	G

Positive Practices: ten local practices

Whilst it must be emphasised that many of the practice ideas were being progressed by the service prior to the local Star Wards initiative, it is fair to say that Star Wards has further reinforced and is helping to focus activities, providing a framework for the recognition, planning and implementation of positive practices.

This benchmarking exercise and review of the Star Wards practice ideas has thus assisted the service in highlighting a series of existing and recently implemented positive practices, which include:-

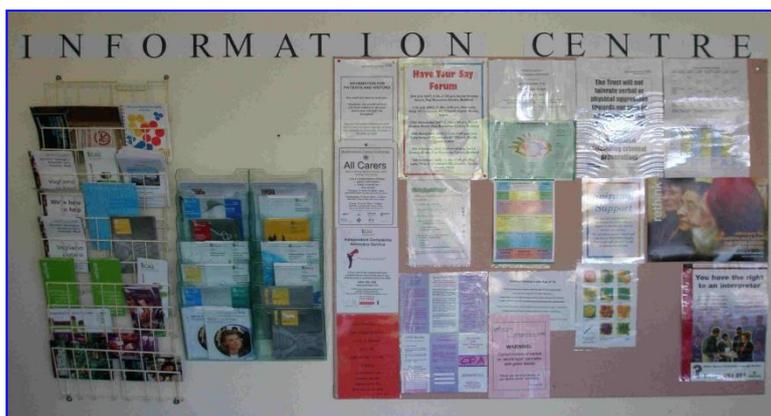
1. Refocusing *acute day intervention*, which has led to the launch of *The Lighthouse* at the Luton-based acute in-patient unit and the implementation / review of 7-day therapeutic intervention programmes for acute in-patients and day-patients at both the Luton-based and Dunstable-based Units.
2. The provision of *personalised information folders* for service-users as soon after admission as possible, which are most likely to include the service-user Unit information brochure, helpline numbers, a satisfaction survey, the service-user’s care-plan (*upon completion*) and health promotion information. It is planned to further develop this practice in offering service-users a personalised recovery folder.
3. The implementation of *protected therapeutic time initiatives* in ensuring that time is prioritised for individual and group therapeutic intervention and activity, whether by closing the Unit / Ward for a set time (*Butler 2006*) or by planning protected time for particular named nurses during each shift.
4. The concurrent use and six-monthly reporting of a two-part *Acute In-patient Satisfaction Survey*, which informs local action-planning in maintaining and enhancing service standards within the three acute in-patient units / wards.



The Lighthouse: Acute Day Intervention Service at Oakley Court in Luton



5. Making freely available written information and health promotion materials widely accessible through the provision of an 'Information Centre' within a central location in the Unit / Ward, such as within the Unit dining room.



An Information Centre – in the Dining Room at Oakley Court

6. The provision of *individual appointment times* for weekly service-user care review meetings, as reinforced through the use of a local protocol.

7. A local *Arts in Health Initiative*, guided by an Arts in Health Coordinator, and local Unit-based Arts Projects in creating and displaying the work of service-users within local Units / Wards. Notable examples have included the creation of art-work by service-users at Townsend Court in Dunstable, which are now being displayed in key locations around the Unit, and the creation and display of a series of art pieces in the recently re-designed dining room of Weller Wing, the Bedford Mental Health Unit. Following the planned refurbishment of Keats Ward in Bedford, it is planned to further extend this initiative.



On display in the reception area of Townsend Court, this was created by a group of service-users.

8. The production of *Unit / Ward information brochures for service-users & carers*, in making available key information about the Unit / Ward and explicitly stating a set of expectations of the care process.

9. The implementation of a *hospitality nurse* system, which has particular value in greeting, meeting, orienting and supporting the newly-admitted service-user.

10. The completion of optional *physical health checks* and *physical health promotion* with all acute in-patients, with further plans for the provision of exercise equipment in all Units and plans for sessions facilitated by a qualified health promotion / fitness instructor at Oakley Court in Luton.



On display in the dining room at Townsend Court, this mock fire-place was created by service-users.

Of course, it is important to recognise that such practice developments are not all achieved without significant challenge – but then that seems to be the difference between those that are straight-forward to introduce and merely require *tweaking* (for example: the information centre), those that require some planning in *turning* practice (for example: the hospitality nurse), and those that require considerable planning, resourcing or the commitment of others in *transforming* local practice (for example: refocusing acute day intervention; protected therapeutic time initiatives; the implementation of a service-user care review protocol). It is the *transforming* initiatives of using protected time ideas and focusing weekly care reviews upon the needs of the service-user that continue to present considerable challenges, but the Star Wards Initiative clearly supports such developments.

Conclusions & Planned Actions

Following the base-line benchmarking exercise, local Star Wards groups are being established within all three Units / Wards and the Star Wards practice ideas are gradually being discussed with service-users during a series of weekly patients meetings in some of the Units / Wards. Furthermore, those practice ideas that have been rated as amber are being integrated into the specific personal objectives of team-members as a part of the ongoing staff appraisal and personal development planning process by the Unit / Ward Managers.

It is hoped to continue to progress the implementation of the Star Wards concept in this way and other wards and teams within the Trust are being invited to participate.

Contacts

For further Information on any of the above practice ideas, please e-mail the following:

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for an e-copy of the local Star Wards Benchmarking Tool & other mentioned resources

References

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