



Music and Memory

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Briefly Describe Your Best Practice:

Our Best Practice involves using the Music and Memory training from Dan Cohen to provide iPod music to help enhance the lives and overall well-being of our residents.

What Problem Does Our Best Practice Address?

Memory loss that comes with dementia oftentimes robs us not just of the ability to recall certain events, dates and places but sometimes takes away the ease of finding a “happier place and a happier time” to remember and revisit. Using familiar music from those “happier times” and reaching those memories that have not yet been erased helps bring joy to our residents and address some of the problems/behaviors associated with dementia.

What groups of residents and others were involved?

In collaboration with the Jefferson County Ombudsman’s Office and the Lawson State Student Government Association we focused on our residents with a dementia diagnosis who were receiving an anti-psychotic medication. The DON, Social Services Director and Activities Director together with the Care Plan Team worked as a group to identify the residents we believed would benefit from the Music and Memory program.

What has your Best Practice Accomplished and how have you been able to tell this?

We have seen relationships develop between the SGA volunteers and their resident. We have seen those who have dementia taken back to a happier time. We have watched one gentleman use his iPod daily and one of our folks who goes to dialysis was initially resistant to the music and now that he has been listening to his iPod, he takes it to dialysis and keeps it in his room and charges it himself!!!! Overall, our use of anti-psychotic medications has continued to decrease and we believe the music and memory program is a part of that.

What problems, obstacles, or challenges might other facilities face in replicating part or all of your innovation? Were there any adverse effects or any ways that things turned out differently than you had planned? Do you know of any other facilities which have tried this or a similar best practice idea?

The primary challenge is to gather the music choices for the residents, especially difficult with those who cannot communicate. We had a music inventory questionnaire and the students gathered this information. There were questions about year you were born, what year did you turn 16 etc. so we could have a best guess as to the type of music that was popular at that time. The introduction of technology was a bit of an obstacle early on. The iPods are small and we had to teach our residents how to use

them. We didn't have any "adverse effects" with any of the residents but we did have 2 residents who passed away and the students who were working with those residents had become attached and were very saddened by this. In our industry, we sometimes forget how profound loss can be. At the time we started, I was not aware of any other homes in our area with this project.

What was the cost to implement your Best Practice? How did you pay for it?

The iPods we started with were \$149.00 each and the headphones were about \$5.00 each. The iPods added after the initial start-up were \$49.95. The initial 10 iPods and 10 headphones, laptop computer for the music storage and \$100 in iTunes gift cards were provided through a grant from the Jefferson County Ombudsman's Office. The total cost of the start-up was approximately \$2,140.00.

What are the reasons you consider this Best Practice to be excellent and innovative?

We believe this is an excellent practice because we are bringing technology to our residents in a very creative and engaging manner, using the latest technology. Dan Cohen was in Birmingham to present his work over the last few years and we were able to see how effective and meaningful music could be. Through a grant from the Jefferson County Ombudsman's Office, we were able to participate in the training from Dan Cohen and 6 of our staff are now "Certified Music and Memory Specialists". It was a new idea to our home and I consider very innovative. In addition to the iPod music that has benefitted our residents, we are now using the laptop computer for an "internet café". We have had Wi-Fi connected and have helped one of our more alert residents set up a Facebook!!! We believe this is most definitely a Best Practice and we are bringing our residents a whole new world with the internet and technology.



