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THERAPEUTIC HAND MASSAGE: EMPOWERING CARERS TO CAREJudith Talbot, Val Evans *St Lukes Hospice, Plymouth England*

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Evidence suggests there is a great need to support social care home staff in End of Life Care (EOL). Staff may lack confidence in their ability to provide EOL care. The Local Hospice has worked with social care homes, running a successful Liverpool Care Pathway training programme. Participants identified other EOL training needs and the focus was directed to the use of therapeutic hand massage, a recognised effective method of providing pain control and comfort for those clients with dementia and distress.

Aim To enable care home staff to use therapeutic touch and non-pharmacological management for end of life symptoms and aid communication with the residents in their care.

Methodology 20 care homes and 23 staff were involved in the pilot. Places were free and staff were recruited at NVQ 3 level and above. The programme was delivered in two workshops, held a month apart. The first day focused on practical hand massage techniques, the theory of therapeutic touch and some guidance on how to run workshops in their own care setting. The second workshop required a case study presentation demonstrating what impact hand massage has had on EOL clients.

Evaluation Participant evaluation of this 'train the trainer' approach demonstrated an increased confidence to provide the training to other care home staff and positive effects on the residents were also reported, in terms of reduced agitation and more engagement in communication. There were also reported benefits for relatives of the residents, as they could perform hand massage when visiting. This made them feel that they were 'doing something' for their loved ones.

Due to the positive outcome of the pilot programme this workshop is now offered as a regular educational programme. The next programme is already oversubscribed and there is a growing demand for the programme.