ONE STEP AT A TIME, THEN GO FOR IT!
IMPLEMENTING A 16-WEEK WELL-BEING PROGRAMME IN A HOSPICE DAY THERAPY UNIT

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10.1136/bmjspcare-2014-000654.305

Background In common with many other hospices, our Day Therapy Unit has been changing from a service used largely by a ‘long-term’ cohort of patients who may have attended for months or years. Over an initial period of around 2 years, work was done to facilitate the discharge of stable patients and to gradually change the ethos of the Day Therapy Unit in moving towards a 16-week, goal focussed attendance.

Aims Building on these changes our aim was to design a 16-week rolling programme, which would help patients to meet their goals and to provide strategies for maintaining well-being.

Results We searched the notes of current patients to gain understanding of the most common reasons for attending Day Therapy Unit. The prominent themes were: to counter social isolation, provide emotional/psychological support and to improve mobility and pain.

A programme was devised covering 8 sessions over 16 weeks. Topics were chosen based on the domains in the ‘Holistic common assessment’ document. The domains are: physical well-being, social and occupational well-being, psychological well-being with spiritual well-being and life goals. Titles of our sessions include ‘Bucket list and beyond’, ‘Controlling your pain’, ‘Resilience’ and ‘There is life after Day Therapy Unit’. Sessions will promote group discussion and individual reflection. Patients will be provided with written material to accompany the sessions. Delivery of the programme is truly multi-disciplinary: facilitators are nurses, doctor, physiotherapist, clinical psychologist, social worker, chaplain and counsellor. We continue to offer physiotherapy, complementary therapies and art therapy alongside this new programme.

Our hope is that this programme will enable us to promote a culture of enablement amongst our current patients and to reach larger numbers of patients. Once the programme is established, we intend to investigate whether there is a demonstrable improvement in markers such as Quality of Life.