

Acute Training Solutions

Recording & Report Writing - A Day In The Life Of...

2A: Older people: A day in the life of Henry

Henry, aged 81, has been a resident in the home for over a year since the death of his wife. When he first arrived, he seemed quite bewildered and had been extremely withdrawn. He was often crying on his own in his room. He was not a strong man and frequently developed colds and other minor ailments, although his health was not considered a serious problem.

Henry awoke on Thursday 13th July to a grey overcast morning. He thought about his son and daughter-in-law who were on holiday in France. He remembered back to the holidays he had enjoyed with his wife. He recalled the last one before she died. They had gone to Pembroke, where they had been many times before. She loved Pembroke. They were no longer able to walk very far but they enjoyed sitting on the front at Tenby. It was such a pretty place and they had been very happy during that fortnight. The weather had been kind. That was over eleven years ago now. She had had a stroke soon after the holiday and he had nursed her at home for the last decade of her life. He looked out of the window at the garden. It was spacious and well maintained with lots of shrubs. He was fond of sitting out there when the sun shone. But there were no roses. He had always loved roses but he was told they took too much work.

He listened outside and heard footsteps along the corridor. Soon Angela knocked on the door and popped her head round. She said 'Good morning' and asked how he was feeling. He replied as he always did, 'Not too bad thank you'. Angela said she would be back in a few minutes, only she wanted to see how Mrs Andrews was, as she had apparently been rather poorly in the night. After about fifteen minutes, Angela came back and helped Henry to get washed and dressed. Henry had felt very embarrassed to begin with and was still a little uncomfortable at having to rely on others to assist him with such personal aspects of his daily routine; Angela was such a cheerful character and would always chatter on. But Henry liked to be quiet in the mornings and found the noisy bustle rather disconcerting.

When he arrived for breakfast, he tried to sit with Geoff, whom he had slowly got to know over the last few months. Geoff however, had been joined by Mary, who had recently moved to the home and was a very lively lady and had obviously taken a shine to Geoff. Henry didn't want to intrude and besides he didn't really like Mary. She was always talking about herself and her children and never seemed to give anyone else the chance to talk. Henry sat down with Albert. Albert was fairly quiet and kept himself to himself and that suited Henry. They ate their breakfast in mutual silence.

After breakfast Henry returned to his room with his daily paper and sat reading until coffee time. He was reluctant to go down to the lounge but he knew the staff did not like residents remaining in their room for too long, so he made the effort to take coffee with the others. At least the weather had brightened a little. He might even be able to go outside after lunch. When he arrived in the lounge, Angela was already serving coffee and came over with a cup as soon as he sat down. She had put a biscuit in his saucer. It was a digestive. He didn't like digestives and had said so before but no one seemed to remember. He had given up saying anything. They meant well after all and he knew they already thought he was a bit of a miserable old so-and-so.

Henry sat alone and gazed out of the window, not looking at anything in particular. Edith, another resident called across to him and asked if he was looking forward to the sing-song this afternoon. He said he had forgotten about it and thought he might go outside if it was warm enough.

Edith said he didn't know what he was missing. It was a lot of fun and everyone had a good time singing all the old songs. Henry remembered how his wife had used to sing. She had a lovely voice and played the piano as well. He remembered how thrilled she had been when they were finally able to afford to buy a piano. They had both loved music. That was how they had met. She had been singing in the same choir as his sister and he had gone along to one of the concerts and been introduced to her.

Angela suddenly interrupted his thoughts and asked if he would be coming along to the sing-a-long. Henry repeated what he had said to Edith. He returned to his room feeling very weary. He looked at the paper again but didn't feel he wanted to do the crossword after all. Instead he switched on the radio and listened to Radio 3. They were playing his favourite composer, Mozart.

At 12.30p.m, Fiona, another care worker, knocked on the door to remind him lunch was nearly ready. Henry was actually feeling quite hungry and looked forward to something to eat. When he entered the dining room Mary was once again already sitting with Geoff. Henry sat with Albert. He enjoyed the lamb hotpot. The apple pie was only lukewarm and the custard was too runny but he finished it nevertheless. Albert said he didn't want custard but no one heard him and they put a bowl with custard in front of him. He looked at Henry helplessly. Henry called out to Angela and said that Albert didn't want any custard. Angela looked flustered but changed the bowl for one without custard. Albert smiled gratefully at Henry.

After lunch, Henry fetched his coat and went outside to sit in the garden. It was still a little chilly and the sun continued to make only fleeting appearances between the cloud. Henry could hear the singing inside. He walked slowly to the bench further down the garden. He looked at the shrubs. They were mostly spring varieties and their blossoms had long disappeared. He thought about the roses. He had grown so many. They had won prizes at local shows. He looked across the garden and thought how much brighter it would look with some more flowers. He closed his eyes and remembered his own garden. Suddenly his peace was disturbed by the sound of the lawn mower. He looked up confused. It wasn't the usual day for cutting the grass. Colin, the part-time gardener sensed his confusion and explained that, as he was going on holiday for a fortnight, he had to tidy things up before he went. Henry couldn't bear the noise and made his way inside. Inevitably, people thought he had come in to join in with the sing-song. He mumbled something about Colin, and the lawnmower, and escaped to his room. He sat down in his chair. He felt so lonely. Suddenly he wanted to cry. He hadn't felt like that for months. He tried to stop himself but the tears trickled down his face.

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Recording & Report Writing - A Day In The Life Of...

2B: Children and younger people: A day in the life of Claire

Claire, aged fourteen, heard noises outside her room. She still felt sleepy and the room was cold. She looked toward the window. She really didn't like those curtains. The staff had told her that she could arrange the room as she wanted. But that was nearly four weeks ago, when she first arrived and no one had said anything since. Claire liked bright colours but everything in the room was dark. Navy curtains and carpet and dark blue wallpaper with that stupid pattern. Her social worker had said that she wouldn't be there that long, but she had only seen her once since she had arrived.

It was the 5th of June, her mother's birthday. Last year she had bought her Mum some perfume. She had really liked it. They were getting on well then. Her Mum had been a lot happier. Claire's Dad had walked out when she was only four. She couldn't really remember much about him and they never heard from him. Her Mum had been very depressed for a long time but seemed better after she started working at the local pub. But then she met Martin and he moved in after they had gone to Spain together for a holiday. Claire had never liked him. He always thought he knew everything and then when he started coming into her room when her Mum was out, she tried to stop him. She tried to tell her Mum but they just said she was trying to make trouble: until she got pregnant. And then her Mum accused her of sleeping around and being a slut. She had stayed out nights but that was because she didn't want to go home. And even after she'd taken the tablets and had to go to hospital, her mother still didn't want to know. She told social services she couldn't cope with Claire anymore. So Claire had an abortion and was then sent to Melrose House.

At least it was Saturday and she didn't have to go to school. She hated school. The only thing she was any good at was art, but what was the use of that. It wouldn't get her a job. She heard Sandra, one of the care staff calling to Ben, who had the room next to hers. He always had his radio on really loud. Sandra told him to turn it down. It was a bit quieter for a few minutes but then Ben turned it up once more. Claire had wanted a lie-in, but she was feeling restless and hungry by now. She pulled on some clothes, looked for her hairbrush, but couldn't find it and went down to the kitchen.

Karen and Julie were there already, making themselves some toast. Sandra had made some tea and asked Claire if she wanted any. Claire hated tea and said she would make herself some coffee. Claire looked in the cupboard. She wanted some Cheerios. They had run out and she had reminded Don yesterday to get some when he went shopping, but he had obviously forgotten them. She complained to Sandra, who said she would definitely put it down on the list for the next shopping trip. Claire scanned the boxes of cereals and reluctantly pulled out some Cornflakes. Julie and Karen continued to talk about some girl at school they knew, whom they obviously didn't like. Claire did not recognise the name and did not join in the conversation. Sandra had gone to answer the phone in the office. Claire quickly finished her breakfast and returned to her room.

She thought again about her mother. She wondered if they'd organise a party. Her Mum was forty and Claire supposed her Mum might want a bit of a 'do'. Her elder brother, Kevin, would enjoy that. He always liked a party. She hadn't heard anything from Kevin since she left home. Claire had sent her Mum a birthday card. She wondered if she would hear anything back, maybe a phone call or something. She thumbed through a magazine he had bought yesterday. There was a knock at the door. It was Sandra. She asked if Claire wanted to go swimming. Some of the others wanted to go. Claire said she didn't feel like it. She wanted to see something on television anyway. Sandra said that Pete, the other member of staff on duty would be around if she needed anything. Claire nodded and carried on with the magazine, which she wasn't really reading anyway.

She thought about Shirley, her brother's girlfriend. She had always liked Shirley, and Shirley had been the only one to come and visit her in hospital. She had spoken to her a few times on the phone since she had arrived at Melrose, but Shirley didn't really say much about Claire's Mum or Martin. Still Claire thought it might be an idea to give Shirley a ring. She might know what was happening for her Mum's birthday and whether she had got the card. Claire went down to the phone and dialled Shirley's number. There was no answer. She hung on for a couple of minutes but Shirley must be out. Claire looked at the clock in the hallway; it was nearly time for the programme she wanted to watch.

Claire went into the lounge and found Ben and Larry sprawled out on the sofas. They were watching something on another channel. She said she wanted to watch something else but they said that they had got there first and weren't changing the programme for her. She'd already had a few arguments with Ben and really didn't feel in the mood for one today. So she left them to it and went back to her room.

After about half an hour Pete shouted up that there was a phone call for her. Claire wondered if it might be her Mum. She ran downstairs. It was her friend Toni. She wanted Claire to come shopping with her. She had some birthday money to spend, but Claire said she didn't want to go shopping and she didn't have any money anyway. Claire went back upstairs. She didn't want to stay in her room, but she didn't want to miss her Mum if she did ring. She didn't want to talk to anyone in the house, but she felt so miserable on her own.

Pete knocked on the door and asked if she wanted to help get lunch ready. She said she was going to have a bath and wash her hair. Claire ran a really deep hot bath and locked herself in the bathroom for the next hour. She nearly fell asleep but was aroused when she heard the others return from swimming. Julie and Karen were laughing and giggling over something, but she couldn't hear what they were saying. Sandra banged on the bathroom door and told Claire to hurry up for lunch, Pete had cooked something special.

She went down and discovered that Pete had been making home made pizzas. They tasted a/right but she couldn't see why he had bothered. Everyone gathered round the large kitchen table. Ben and Larry were arguing about something. Sandra asked Karen and Julie where the party was they were going to that evening. They weren't sure but their mate Lisa knew. Sandra asked Claire if she had any plans for the evening. Claire shrugged and said she might go out with her friend Toni. Claire helped with the washing up and then returned to her room, where she continued to wait for the phone to ring.

Discussion points for Claire

Points that might be noted in the daily recording:

- Claire complaining about lack of 'Cheerios'
- Not joining Sandra, Julie and Karen for swimming
- Phone call
- Spent an hour in the bath
- Might go out in the evening with friend, Toni

Issues that need to be identified in the Care plan Objectives:

- Working on feelings about her family, especially her mother. Her mother's birthday was very significant to Claire and although care staff cannot reasonably be expected to be alert to the date of her mother's birthday, if they had been working more closely with Claire, she might have talked with them about it
- Making Claire feel more comfortable in her room. What about the colour scheme? Why can't she be encouraged to repaint the walls and make it feel more like her own space for the time she is there?
- Discussion of long term options. Claire needs to know what is happening and when she might see her social worker again
- Discussion of feelings about school and opportunities to develop more confidence through the activities she likes and feels she can do well, e.g. art

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2C: Learning Disabilities: A day in the life of Brian

Brian awoke at 6.30 am. He always woke early. He didn't need an alarm clock. He was always up before anyone else in the house. He looked out of the window. it was raining. Brian liked the rain. He especially liked walking in it, but his mother would tell him that was silly. He suddenly remembered he had promised to take a tape in for Penny. She had only started at the Resource Centre a few weeks ago, but they were already good friends. Brian rummaged under his bed. He found the magazine he had been looking for, but not the tape. He decided to go to the toilet and look for the tape afterwards. As soon as Brian opened his door, Alfie the dog came running up stairs and started barking. Brian heard his Mum and Dad start to stir.

After he returned to his room, he continued looking for the tape, while Alfie ran around his room, barking more and more excitedly. Brian's Dad stuck his head round the door and told Brian to keep the dog quiet. Brian's Mum shouted to Brian to start getting ready. Brian sat and played with Alfie.

Brian was 24 years old. He had been born with Down's Syndrome and lived with his parents and his sister who was away on a school trip to France. Brian attended the Resource Centre five days a week. His father worked with the Post Office and his mother was training to be a teacher.

Brian's Mum came into his room and started sorting his clothes, putting out clean underwear, saying that the dirty set were ready to walk off by themselves. She told him to go and get washed. Brian ambled off to the bathroom. His mother reminded him to shave as he hadn't bothered yesterday. Brian's father grumbled from the landing that Brian was more lazy than anything else. Brian's Mum went down to the kitchen with his Dad. He could hear them still going on about him. He heard his father saying that his mother did too much and she was wearing herself out with the teaching as well as Brian. Brian ought to be made to do more for himself, Brian's Mum said he didn't understand, he'd never understood. Soon they were shouting at one another.

Brian struggled to put his clothes on. He didn't like it when his Mum and Dad argued. They had always had arguments, but it seemed a lot worse since she had started her course. Brian wished she still stayed at home. He pulled a comb through his hair and went downstairs. Brian's Mum was crying. His Dad was going out of the door. His mother told him not to take any notice and put his breakfast on the table. She went upstairs to the bathroom. Brian sat and ate his breakfast. He listened to the radio but he was worried about his Mum. She came downstairs just before the bus came to take him to the Resource Centre and told him everything was alright. She did his coat up, gave him a kiss and waved him off. Brian sat quietly for most of the journey. His friend, Martin told him about this really good film he had seen with his brother but Brian was not very interested. Martin went and sat with George. On arriving at the Centre, Brian went off to look for Penny. He had forgotten the tape but he wanted to see her. Penny would sometimes spend the mornings helping out in the kitchen, but Wendy, the cook, told Brian that Penny wasn't coming into today, her mother had phoned in to say she was ill.

Brian wandered over to the computer area. He liked playing with the games and was quite good. There were still a few machines free, so he settled down. Frank, who was the member of staff in charge, was busy with Tracey. Tracey was learning word processing and was already able to do the Centre newsletter. Brian didn't like Tracey. He thought she was too full of herself. Frank nodded at Brian and said he would be over in a minute as he had a new game Brian might like to try. Brian played patiently and didn't say anything, although he was looking forward to the new game.

Soon the room filled up and there were no more free computers. Kieran, the manager came in and said there was an important phone call for Frank. After Frank left the room, Olly came in. Olly looked around the room and walked over to Brian. Olly was big and liked to get his own way. Olly said he had some important work to get on with and Brian was just playing stupid games. Brian was afraid of Olly, especially when there were no staff around. Olly had once kicked him very hard deliberately when they were playing football. But Jake, the staff member, hadn't seen anything and Olly just sneered at Brian as he struggled to continue playing. Brian didn't say anything.

Olly told Brian to get out of the way. Brian was angry. He wanted to finish his game and he was sick of Olly pushing him around, but Olly started trying to shove him off his chair. Olly was trying to make out it was a big joke. Everyone was looking. Brian had had enough and he just got up and walked out. Olly was laughing as Brian left the room.

Brian went out into the garden. It was still raining. Fiona came out of the greenhouse and said how she had intended clearing some of the leaves as there were so many now, but it was raining and she would have to leave it. Brian said he would do it. He liked the rain and so he went and got his coat and spent the next half an hour sweeping the leaves and putting them on the compost.

Brian came in for coffee. Frank came over and asked him if he wanted to play the new game. Brian said he was bored with computers. Frank asked if Olly had said anything to him. Brian shook his head. Frank said that if Brian changed his mind, he would show him how it worked. After coffee, Brian went back outside. The rain had stopped and he spent the rest of the morning tidying up. Fiona said what a good job he'd done.

Brian was not really hungry but he ate all his lunch. His Mum told him he was getting too fat but Brian had a sweet tooth. He had two portions of pudding. After lunch Martin asked Brian if he wanted to play a game of cards. Brian agreed. Martin told him all over again about the film he'd seen with his brother but Brian didn't mind, he was pleased to be doing something and Martin was always friendly.

Soon it was time for the bus to go home. Brian would have to stay with Harriet, the lady who lived next door, until his Mum came home. Brian sat and watched television. Harriet made him some tea and gave him a piece of cake. His mother got home later than usual, saying that she had got held up. She cooked dinner for Brian and herself, saying Dad was working late. After dinner Brian went upstairs to his room. He tidied his bed and found the tape he had been looking for in the morning. He put it on and listened to it through his headphones so he wouldn't disturb his Mum. He knew she'd be having a nap after dinner. He hoped Penny would be better tomorrow.

Discussion points for Brian

Points that might be noted in the daily recording:

- Brian saying to Frank that he wanted to play with the new computer game and then later saying he was bored with computers. There might also be a mention of the response in relation to being asked about Olly
- Helping to clear up in the garden
- Playing cards with Martin

Issues that need to be identified in the Careplan Objectives:

- Supporting Brian in negotiating different relationships within the resource centre, e.g. Penny and Olly
- Purposeful programme of activities so that computer time is ensured
- Consideration of home circumstances, and how they might be affecting Brian

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2d: Physically Disabled: A day in the life of Surinder

Surinder, a Sikh woman of forty eight, waited for the transport. She had heard the clock chime half past nine so she knew it was late. Still the driver was always friendly, well at least his voice seemed pleasant enough. People she had met since the accident, only existed as voices, and smells, and perhaps by their touch, the way they would hold her, confidently or tentatively.

Ron, the driver, greeted her and pushed her wheelchair down the path. She waited as the ramp raised her into the back of the transport vehicle.

When Surinder arrived at the day centre she joined the group for sewing and embroidery. She had always enjoyed embroidery and even though she could no longer see the product of her labours, she could feel the stitches and conjure up an image in her head. It gave her some satisfaction. The staff at the centre had tried to get her to learn Braille and then suggested computer skills, but she had found it all too frustrating and had given up. She knew they were disappointed with her and expected her to try harder but what was the point.

It was the same with the wheelchair. She didn't want to go out in it. She was embarrassed. It didn't matter what the staff said, or her husband or her daughter, she would never come to terms with it. She was fed up with all this putting a brave face on it. Some days she just felt like screaming, 'Why me?' Why did she have to be walking down that road at that time or why did that car have to be driving down that road at the same time. She didn't remember anything but she would be living with the consequences for the rest of her life. Did any of them know how desperate she felt sometimes? Her feelings were often in such turmoil, frustrated, angry, desolate, and yet guilty for being so negative and full of self-pity. The staff had tried to talk to her about counselling, but she couldn't share those terrible feelings with anyone else.

Surinder quietly sewed for most of the morning. Estelle Monbiot, the instructor, asked her if she was interested in learning patchwork as there were lots of different materials she could work with, which she might find interesting and enjoyable. Surinder felt an instant disinclination to do anything which would just make her more painfully aware of her limitations, and of how difficult it was to learn anything new. She said she would think about it.

Surinder wanted to be alone. She asked to be wheeled out to the patio at the back of the day centre. It was quiet there. There was a cool breeze, they wrapped her up and she felt cocooned, strangely removed from everything and everyone around her. This induced a brief sense of calm but suddenly her sense of isolation felt like a physical pain, great torrents of grief overwhelmed her. She felt her whole body convulsing with the emotion. She felt abandoned, helpless before her demons, all the wretched despair welled up inside her. She tried to pray but her prayers were empty gestures in which she no longer found any comfort. She cried and moaned but no one saw or heard her. Everyone was busy with other things.

After half an hour, Tom came out to see how she was. Surinder had regained her composure. She said her headache was worse, but she was alright. Tom chatted about the creative writing group and asked her how it was going. Surinder said she didn't really like it. Tom asked her what she might like to do instead. Surinder said she didn't know.

Discussion points for Surinder

Points that might be noted in the daily recording:

- Surinder spent the morning doing embroidery. The option of learning patchwork was suggested by Estelle Monbiot, the instructor. Surinder said she would think about it but did not seem very enthusiastic
- Surinder complained of a head ache after lunch, and said she did not want to join the creative writing group, which she later said she didn't like
- Surinder spent time alone on patio

Issues that need to be identified in the Careplan Objectives:

- Working with feelings about her disabilities in a less formal context than counselling. Surinder is uncomfortable with the idea of counselling and may respond more positively to what she may perceive as a less pressurised approach. Surinder may be more willing to talk about her feelings when she feels a relationship has already been established. Staff, especially her keyworker, may find that more is achieved by themselves building a more trusting relationship with Surinder, than by focusing on the value of counselling
- There is a danger that in continuing to offer Surinder different options for activities in an attempt to develop her skills and confidence, the approach is having the reverse effect, making Surinder more aware of what she can't do and what she finds difficult and frustrating. The record then reads as a catalogue of failed initiatives and a testimony to Surinder's seemingly negative attitude
- Perhaps the emphasis needs to be placed on what Surinder can do. She is clearly making progress at home with cooking and maybe that could be developed further. This could then be linked to a strategy for how she will manage when her daughter goes to university