

## Acute Training Solutions

### Advanced Dementia - Case Studies

#### Case Study One

Steve is 89 and has macular degeneration plus dementia. When he started to live at Vista's New Wycliffe Home for the Blind he rarely showed any facial expression. He had difficulty dressing and there seemed little that he could do by himself. Staff recognised that he liked to walk so, in order to try to get him to regain some independence they showed him the rails in the garden and walked round with him many times until he was confident enough to walk in the garden by himself.

Still looking for things to stimulate Steve, the manager thought he might like to go on the one of the regular sailing trips the home arranges with a voluntary organisation that supports people with disabilities to enjoy activities. When asked if he would like to go, Steve said he would. When they got to the lake the volunteers helped Steve orientate himself by encouraging him to feel the water, which he loved. The voluntary organisation has hoists to assist people in and out of the boats and one was needed for Steve. The volunteers talked him through every step and he was not anxious at all.

Once sailing Steve started to have a beaming smile. He did not stop smiling all day. The staff at the home have a bit of a joke with him now and say Aye Aye captain to him and he belly laughs with such joy.

#### What are your thoughts about this?

## Case Study Two

Amy is 80 and lives in Vista's New Wycliffe Home for the Blind and had twice lost her hearing aid. The reason for this was that Amy was so worried about losing her aids that she would put them somewhere for safe keeping (forgetting that the best place is back in their boxes). These places might be in the pillowcase of her pillow, wrapped in a tissue on her window ledge or tucked down the side of her chair. This behaviour is not uncommon in care homes and it is easy to understand why it happens as residents want to keep their hearing aids safe. So staff have been made aware of this and now always look inside pillowcases when they change the beds. When a hearing aid gets lost the staff look under the beds, at the back of radiators and down the sides of chairs first! Like other residents with sensory loss, when Amy is without her hearing aids she becomes withdrawn and in a state of ill being. That rarely happens now.

## What are your thoughts about this?

### Case Study Three

Hannah is an 89 year old woman with dementia and is sitting in the hall waiting for her family to take her out for the day. She calls the support worker over to help her with her coat. The phone rings and the worker says "I'll just answer the phone. I'll be back in a minute".

Hannah does not understand the words. What she knows is that the worker has turned her back and walked away. Hannah starts to shout and pushes past another resident.

Although the worker has promised to return and help, the message received is that she has been abandoned. The non-verbal communication has not been alleviated by the verbal reassurances.

### What are your thoughts about this?

### Case Study Four

One day Caroline refused to go into the bath. The staff discussed this and discovered that this happened when one staff member supported her with her bathing, but not when others helped her.

Further enquiries revealed that the member of staff who was having the difficulties was placing the bath mat on the floor before Caroline got into the bath. To Caroline the mat looked like a big hole in front of the bath.

The other staff were placing the bath mat down after Caroline had got in the bath and just before she got out they would wrap the towel around Caroline, obscuring her view so as not to see the edges of the mat.

### What are your thoughts about this?

### Case Study Five

Pamela is a 74 year old woman with a diagnosis of dementia. The onset of dementia has led to a change in her sleeping pattern. Initially she would wake and just need some reassurance from staff. Then she started to wake up and scream that people were in her room and they were dancing on the end of her bed.

Staff would try to reassure her but as soon as they would leave the room Pamela became distressed about the "intruders".

On investigation, the three hinged mirrors on the dressing table at the end of her bed was reflecting Pamela's own image. This appeared to Pamela as the people dancing – the more agitated she became the more they "danced".

### What are your thoughts about this?

### Case Study Six

Angus was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease five years ago. His wife, Jean, didn't want to leave him alone for long, but she really needed a break from caring. They were both in their late-seventies.

Angus was offered a place at the local day centre, but he didn't want to go and Jean was worried about getting him there and back. Jean's a keen singer and had enjoyed going to a local choir group and meeting with her friends, but hadn't been able to go for months because of caring for Angus.

### What are your thoughts about this?

## Case Study Seven

Pat was diagnosed with vascular dementia a year ago, but he'd had symptoms for a while before that. He was 64 and lived on his own – his grown-up children stayed in a different part of the country. He wanted to keep living in his own home, but he knew he needed some extra help. He was also keen bowler, but was worried about getting lost on his way to and from his local club. He also found it hard to explain to the other bowlers about why he got confused sometimes.

## What are your thoughts about this?