

Better Together:

Enhancing Patient Care through a Collaborative Group Therapy Program

Introduction/Problem

Through patient feedback, the SW/OT team on Deaconess 4 determined there were not enough activities on the unit and that patients were requesting more groups. The team brainstormed around patient needs and satisfaction, while considering the impact on staff, unit space, and workflow for all disciplines.

Aim/Goal

The goal of the project is to enhance patient care and improve the therapeutic offerings on the unit, while also shifting staff perceptions regarding how OT and SW contribute clinically to the patient experience. The goal of the SW/OT team is to enable patients to identify concrete benefits (i.e., skills, insights, support) they received from therapy groups during their care. Such benefits will hopefully allow patients to engage in outpatient supports more readily and for longer periods of time, thus enhancing well-being and reducing the likelihood of a re-admission.

The Team

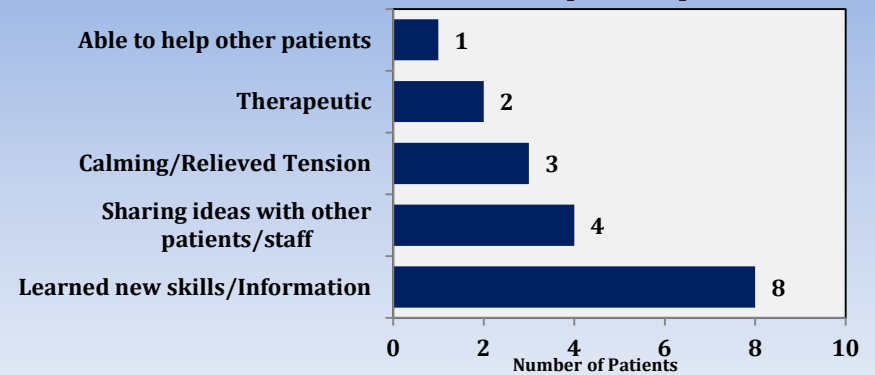
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The Interventions

- The SW/OT team met to brainstorm where to add groups into the day amidst other changes on the unit. The team also discussed content and goals of group, coordination and communication around group themes, exercises, and materials, and documentation. A survey was created to garner feedback from every patient in an effort to continue improving the content and number/type of groups offered.
- The SW/OT team identified that patient engagement and participation was an issue and considered ways to motivate more patients to attend groups. Each patient is personally invited by the group leader, with additional encouragement provided by the nurses and mental health associates, who guide patients to various groups. Additionally, the TVs on the unit are turned off during group times so as not to distract or prevent patients from attending.
- The SW/OT team seeks feedback from staff and in monthly leadership and staff meetings. The team engaged staff in educational discussions about different types of therapeutic groups and encouraged them to come and observe.
- Alongside these more formal venues, the SW/OT team has had many individual conversations with staff to increase understanding, motivation, and energy in having patients engage in groups.

Results/Progress to Date

Patient Identified Benefits of Group Participation



Lessons Learned

Challenges in developing new programming centered on (1) scheduling groups in light of patient flow and treatment team needs to meet with patients individually, (2) finding space in which to conduct additional groups, and (3) communicating these changes to staff. Lessons learned include:

- importance of SW/OT commitment to do the work and address the inevitable challenges;
- importance of open discussion/feedback from all staff to the success of new programming;
- importance of communication in creating greater patient and staff engagement.

Next Steps

- As a result of patient and staff feedback, the SW/OT team determined to expand the pilot and add six additional groups per week. The team also decided to gather patients into higher- and lower-functioning cohorts in order to enhance participation and maximize group benefits
- The current pilot will be reviewed at the end of March. Based on patient, staff, and SW/OT feedback on successes and challenges, the team will modify and expand the program. The team will continue to solicit recommendations and incorporate them into the expansion, which will eventually include weekend programming specifically focused on enrichment.
- The SW/OT team will partner with PFAC to connect and collaborate on the patient/family experience in treatment and, as such, bring meaningful program changes and improvement to patient care on Deaconess 4.

For more information, contact:

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