

MEDIA RELEASE:

For Immediate Release

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A New Approach to Dementia in Acute Care

Norfolk General Hospital staffs regularly treat and support patients with dementia, an age-related disease that affects cognitive ability. Often, individuals with dementia are frightened or confused by the unfamiliar hospital environment and may react to what they believe are potential threats. This may pose a risk to either their well-being or to others. At these times it becomes essential to know how to de-escalate the situation, a task that often requires a great deal of patience and care.

Norfolk Hospital Nursing Home staff is already certified in Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA), an educational curriculum that helps front line and support staff members better understand how to care for patients with dementia. Through GPA, they have learned sometimes the best approach is to simply stop and listen. This training is now being implemented at Norfolk General Hospital.



L to R: GPA Coaches - Robin Mummery, Wendy Squires, Deborah Spinelli, Sara Block, Sherry Chambers.

GPA Coach training was held this past June in Hamilton at St. Peter's Hospital, Hamilton Health Sciences. 10 NGH staff representatives learned strategies to support patients with Dementia. The staff was educated on how to use a person-centred, compassionate and gentle persuasive approach to respond respectfully, with confidence and skill, to reactive behaviors associated with dementia. Behavior traditionally viewed as "disruptive" or "aggressive" is interpreted as self-protective or responsive behavior that has resulted from unmet physical, psychological, spiritual, or

cultural needs. Staff is able to assess the meaning behind the behavior and work together with the patient to meet the patient's needs.



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“These 10 Multidisciplinary staff GPA Coaches will support our patients, families and colleagues as a resource and be involved in teaching their peers. Education will be offered on a monthly basis to all staff at Norfolk General Hospital over the next 2-3 years” said Sherry Chambers, Clinical Nurse Educator. Expectations for GPA are senior care friendly supporting an improved patient and family experience. NGH need only look at the example of Hamilton Health Sciences. The implementation of GPA at HHS resulted in a reduction of physical and chemical restraints with patients receiving care on acute care units.

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“Our mission is to relieve illness and suffering, and help people live healthier lives.”