**Robin Centre Dementia Care Day Centre: Community Scope Experience Reflection**

Initially, I did not know what to expect but was quite excited to learn more about people with Dementia. I am very passionate about the subject around Dementia because from personal experience working as an auxiliary nurse and being on placement, where many through lack of understanding are not providing the care that can empower dementia patients.

One my first day, I was introduced to everyone, including the service users as they arrived and had my induction. The environment was not clinical at all but very homely. The armchairs were arranged in such a way that everyone could see and recognise each other, and able to interact with each other, not only with the people on each side of their chair but across and opposite.

The dining area was also arranged in the same way, each table seated four people, most were given the choice where they wanted to sit, and some were selected to sit with people they interacted well with. There was one table that was people who just needed a little more support and guidance. This seating arrangement still allowed service users to interact with people on other tables.

Everyone interacted with each other which was very warming to see. The staff acknowledged every individual they came across as did the managers. The staff asked if they could have their coats after they selected the chair they wanted to sit in. Majority had mobility aids, mainly walking sticks and walking stands, some with wheels. Once seated these were handing to staff. These aids were provided when mobile. Managers were also very much involved and never saw them pass service users without acknowledging them or sitting with them to have a chat. This acknowledgment made them smile and their faces lighted, which to me appeared to make the service users feel valued and that they mattered.

I felt I interacted well with each individual, initially, I was being very careful what I said and how I said it because I did not know what reaction I would get. I always sorted out information about service users to have some understanding and knowledge about their dementia, backgrounds and anything else that I needed to pay attention to. This knowledge enabled me to have a 2-way conversation.

When the service users first arrive, and if early are asked if they would like a drink which was given in a cup and saucer. I thought this was a sensitive touch which most service users would relate to with memories. As more arrived they would independently select where they wanted to sit, some would go to their usual seat and others would look who is present and select a person they want to sit with. It appeared they all created a bond and friendship.

Once all have arrived the service users are encouraged to have their breakfast in the dining area. It was interesting seeing how people would cluster together, just like any other would. I was a little ashamed of myself to think that they may not be able to have this type of interaction, but my experience of people with dementia was at the stage of advanced dementia. It felt blessed when I saw all the service users interacting in this way because I felt that they were not alone in this journey and fortunate to have loved ones and a day centre like this, and the staff to bring everyone together.

After breakfast everyone was asked if they wanted to use the toilet, enhancing positive behavioural intervention, that is supported by studies that routine behavioural prompts with the aid of clear signage will lead to the acknowledge of the outcome the behaviour and requests, in this case, the need to use the toilet. It is a simple action that we take for granted but people with dementia need simple acts such as these to provide care with dignity which leads to empowerment.

One service user, required to increase her mobility and was therefore asked if she would like to help around. She was encouraged to wipe the tables, give out sweets, collects pens and paper, which appeared to make her feel good about being able to participate which again leads to empowering this individual.

Every morning and afternoon, a staff member would select an activity according the service users present, before activity, they would be encouraged to get involved in upper body exercise whilst sitting in their armchairs. The music was selected with service users in mind. This involved everyone to follow instructions which involved in understand what has been asked of them as well as retaining that information for the length of time it was needed. If anyone was not sure what to do, they would look at others to mimic in order to participate. Other elements challenged their coordination and motor function, acknowledging their left and right side, recognising words of body parts and location, and spatial awareness. Everyone seemed to enjoy these exercises. The activities followed after were associated with coordination like throwing a bean bag in a hole, or throwing a large brightly coloured ball to each other but before that, say the name of the person they are going to throw the ball out, again if they did not know the name it was encouraged that everyone helped. The activities also included, quizzes to answer question which were mainly history, bingo which related to recognising words of numbers and identifying them by crossing them out. No one was left to feel as if they did not know anything, group participation was always encouraged. This is what I felt bought everyone together in this day centre, trusting relationship with staff, management and other service users, thereby creating a warm and welcoming environment. I would be more than happy to bring my loved ones to this day centre.

I also noticed management immediately picked up on small things and responded to them immediately, for example, an armchair was on a tilt which blocked a service users view, this was addressed to the staff, stating to make sure everyone is made to feel that they are all included and there should be no barriers to block anyone’s view so not to make them feel unwanted. Another incident where there were too many staff clearing and not many interacting with service users, this was immediately pointed and corrected. In my personal opinion and my previous experience in management, I recognised that the managers had the right approach and attitude in how they dealt and addressed issues of concern and requesting for immediate change. I feel strongly that this approach acts as a deterrent for poor practice and placing service users in harm.

This has been an invaluable experience which I aim to further develop, and use the skills I have learned in a hospital setting.