

Reducing Restrictive Practice

Reflecting on our project

Changing the way we engage our service users by using the *Emotions Tree*

Beechwood is an assessment and treatment ward providing care for older people who have functional mental health needs, such as depression, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.

We have been working as part of the National Mental Health Safety Improvement Programme since August 2022 to reduce restrictive practices. We have very low levels of restrictive practices and have focused our work on improving the experience and outcomes for our patients and their families.



One change idea we tested was the Emotions Tree

As part of Mental Health awareness week in Spring 2023 we thought how best we could support people on the ward to talk more about their feelings and emotions.

We got a group together and gave people paper to start thinking and writing about what they were feeling. Some people found this hard, so we moved to smaller groups and talked.

Some people felt able to talk rather than write. We were surprised by how open people were. Some felt safer in a small room and with small numbers. Ground rules were set that it was a safe place to talk. No one was forced to share.

We focused on anxiety at the first session which gave us a chance to provide education and a place to talk. We added people's ideas and thoughts about anxiety to handprints which we then added to the Emotions Tree.

What our patients, staff and carers say

All the patients applauded what we did when the tree was first displayed in the communal ward area.

Feedback – fantastic

Normalised feelings

Staff – student experience: good learning – open conversations facilitated

Some feedback we received:

'it was very helpful'

'brilliant idea'

'I found myself looking at it often'

'it was useful to see how others were feeling'

Family: *'brilliant idea to get people conversating on important subjects and finding ways of helping themselves'*.

Changes we have seen on the ward

We have noticed a number of changes on the ward:

- More engagement between people on the ward and between the people and staff.
- More conversation about anxiety and how this affects people.
- The visual of the tree helps people connect.
- More interaction with the lead on the project - people more likely to approach and talk about how they are feeling.
- People are interested in the tree and have made suggestions about future topics.
- Improved understanding of how service users may be feeling.
- Education and ways to support service users are now more evident.

Looking to the future

Next steps are:

- Explore other feelings and emotions, which have been chosen by the patients, so all sessions are co – designed.
- Aim for every other week to update.
- Follow the same process with small groups, time to talk and then share the learning on the tree for all to see.
- As we develop our emotions, we plan to take photos and either display on the ward or add to a book

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