



Avon and Wiltshire 
Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

‘Knowing Each Other’

What Does Safewards Offer?

- An initiative to make inpatient wards, kinder and more agreeable places to work on and for our service users to access care in person centred way.
- Provides interventions through which we can develop our communication skills and safely socialise ourselves on the ward.
- Precludes the use of restraint and seclusion by pursuing a therapeutic dialogue.

Soft Words

- Aimed at asking a service user to do or to stop doing something.
- Handled badly this can sound provocative and infantilising.
- Combining a soft words vocabulary with sensitively moderating our voice we can encourage our service users to make safe and informed choices around their conduct.
- The more adept we are with using Soft words the more positive interactions we will have with our service users.
- This creates a virtuous circle of Positive Words which we can use to describe our service user at handover.



Mutual Help Meeting

- A regular meeting held on the ward where service users can build supportive peer relationships.
- This is based on four rounds:
- **News**, anything unusual or extraordinary happening on the ward which service users should know about.
- **Thanks**, a chance for anyone to express thanks to a peer or member of staff for a supportive or kind act.
- **Suggestions**, the chance to suggest how we can get along and support each other.
- **Offers**, the chance for each participant to say how the ward community can assist or help them, and when others can offer to fulfil this request.



Know Each Other

- This Safewards intervention comprises of a two fold approach.
- Firstly a staff photo board visible to service users on the ward, wherever possible showing the entire substantive ward team, accompanied by a short ice breaker caption, for example 'I like walking my dog on the beach.'
- Secondly there is a Know Each Other template for completion by staff, to safely share aspects of their identity and their lives.





Know Each Other

- **The thinking behind this intervention is to redress some of the imbalance of information we hold about our service users, by safely sharing something about ourselves.**
- **This recreates something which happens in life, that when we meet someone we have something in common with or are curious about then we have the basis for conversation, rapport and trust.**



Safewards

Know Each Other Template- Staff

You do not need to answer every question on this form, but please tell us something about yourself!
This will be typed up, laminated and put in a folder which will be kept in the communal areas of the ward, to help people to get to know each other.

Name:
Job title:
Years of experience working in mental health:
Likes:
Dislikes:
Hobbies/interests:
Previous Jobs:
Favourite TV programme: Film : Book: Music: Please try and give some explanations for your answers (e.g. 'because it makes me laugh...')
Favourite quote:
Top life tip:
Anything else???



Relational Security

- There are some concerns within secure services about the use of the Know Each Other intervention.
- The argument is that there is no such thing as innocuous information shared with a service user.
- But it's difficult to build trust and rapport, especially with people who struggle with trust issues without sharing something about ourselves.
- I think it's important to remember that while psychologists and medics spend very limited time periods with service users and never disclose about themselves, ward staff will spend up to twelve hours on a shift working directly with service users.
- Those staff need to seem approachable and relatable.

Safely Sharing

- Sharing about ourselves seems to me a matter of common sense. I advise that if you question whether you should share something then probably it's best not to.
- The Know Each Other group was intended to build on the existing use of the intervention on Fairfax ward and to try to enhance it.
- This meant all participants could take part as equals, whether ward manager, nurse, HCA, student nurse and service user, and including myself as the Safewards lead.





Outcomes

- A more bonded ward community with greater equality.
- A means to build trust and rapport which could pay off when things become more difficult and challenging on the ward.
- The opportunity to be welcoming and inclusive to all service users, and to be flexible and adaptable to their personalities.
- Service users feeling that they have a voice and are heard and that their life experiences matter and are of interest and import to us.
- The groups stimulated a process of trust and interaction which I hope will be perpetuated.
- The groups can be repeated and revisited.
- Using the writing journals, service users have their written record.