Community Nursing Covid-19 Innovation/Best Practice

CASE STUDY

Supported Self-Managed Care for Staff and Patients
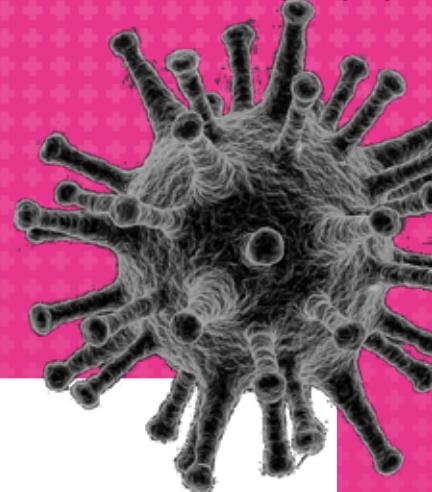
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Please describe your practice innovation.

The Covid 19 pandemic has been a fast moving evolving situation that has unexpectedly challenged many healthcare systems. To respond to the crisis, these systems have had to reorganise rapidly. Larwood and Bawtry Integrated Care Team in Bassetlaw quickly responded to the crisis by bolstering a culture of supported self-managed care amongst its staff and patients, as endorsed by the NHS Long Term Plan's (2019) commitment to make personalised care business as usual.

To encourage self-care amongst patients, we immediately adapted our telephone triage system to only triage our own Primary Care Network referrals. This change enabled staff to have improved local, meaningful and actionable intelligence of patients, thus allowing better understanding of their needs when encouraging self-care management via telephone triage.

Through excellent communication skills, staff engaged, encouraged and empowered patients and family members to identify the knowledge, skills and confidence they already have to manage their health care. Examples included self-care tasks such as basic wound care, insulin administration, and bladder maintenance in order to develop, protect, maintain and improve their health, wellbeing and overall wellness.

This experience also gave staff renewed confidence going forward to educate patients to instantly understand how to look after their own physical and mental wellbeing, thus reducing the impact on the district nursing service. Looking into the future, our aim is to further encourage self-care and embed it into everyone's everyday life, making it a lifelong habit and culture. To do this, our student district nurse is creating a 'Digital District Nurse Handbook' which we are hoping to roll out soon, encouraging the use of technology to better support patients in their own homes.

This digital innovation is backed by the NHS Long Term Plan where digitally enabled care will go mainstream across the NHS. It is our aim that the digital district nursing handbook would also promote the district nursing service and give patients an electronic access to information to promote independence and self-care.

The Digital District Nursing Handbook will sit within 'Recap' (a service provided by Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust) and will contain information about district nursing and the primary care network. It will include consent forms, the complaints procedure, service provision and expectations from the patient. Contact numbers for other services, for example social services, hospitals and podiatry will also be included.

Digital folders will then be created within Recap with information leaflets, videos, blogs for peer support information, self-help information relating to self insulin administration for example, smoking cessation, healthy lives, catheter care, long

Practice innovation– continued.

term conditions, what to do in a crisis/who to contact. This will makes the District Nursing Handbook individualised to the patient's needs, identifying areas for self-care and health promotion. There is huge potential within this innovation for all stakeholders, whilst highlighting the district nursing service and the role of the district nurse within the locality.

The coronavirus pandemic will almost certainly be a marathon, not a sprint. Looking after ourselves and our colleagues has never been more important. To continue to deliver the best possible care for its duration, we have encouraged staff to take regular breaks and annual leave to recharge batteries to prevent fatigue and drops in performance. As it is an ever changing environment, we have encouraged learning and culture of reflection in an attempt to be solution focussed and orientated to problems that arise.

We have continued to encourage nominations for 'positive stars' within the team and also continue to reward staff in house with our 'employee of the month' box, which is filled with treats.

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How has this enabled you to treat/support patients/residents/families/carers more effectively and safely?

Patients / families / carers have been more empowered to self-care, allowing them to gain confidence, take individual responsibility and be at the heart of decision making for their own health.

4/

How has this enabled you to work more effectively with colleagues/partner organisations?

By supporting colleagues with the self-care agenda via telephone triage, staff have become more confident and empowered to work with patients and families, provide self-care advice, based on the person's individual assets, needs and preferences, as well as considering any inequalities and accessibility barriers and so working in a personalised way, based on what matters to the patient. Overall we have seen this has reduced workload, allowing additional time for patients who most require a visit, especially palliative patients, and taking the time pressure of for staff.

Reducing workload has also allowed colleagues the time to complete other activities, such as e-learning/ courses, supporting the agenda of the NHS 5 Year Forward View by ensuring staff have the right skills to care for their patients. We have worked very closely with the Primary Care Network (PCN) and have discussed home visits on a daily/weekly basis to share workload. We also utilised and signposted to organisations, such as social prescribing BCVS (Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service), therapy services, specialist palliative supportive services on a regular basis to reduce social isolation, improve community networks and put the patient at the heart of the health journey.

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Do you see this new way of working as a temporary adaptation to current conditions, or a permanent/evolving change?

The new way of working is definitely here to stay and has provided so many positive changes within team.

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Please describe any particular challenges you had to overcome.

Changing the self-care behaviour of patients has been one particular challenge and has been a major source of frustration for colleagues. To overcome this we have had to provide extra support to colleagues in the form of flow diagrams when triaging to allow colleagues to gain confidence to challenge whilst still supporting patients. We have focused on addressing patient motivations and barriers to change, teaching strategies to cope and engaging family and social support.

The overall feedback has been very positive with patients happy that they are now taking responsibility for their own health.

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Please describe any continuing challenges you would like to address.

Getting the 'Digital District Nursing Handbook up and running is proving challenging in respect of the time it is taking to properly establish this. We are definitely pursuing this though, as we can see what enormous benefit it will have to support with the self-care agenda.

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Please give any individual examples, quotes or other information.

'We cannot direct the wind but we can adjust the sails.'

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Please list any websites, online platforms or apps that have helped you.

Recap online platform within Nottinghamshire Healthcare is helping us develop the digital nursing handbook

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Kay Stocks