

Confusion and risk for falls: *How a volunteer intervention can assist*

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Scenario



The significance

- 1/3 patients >70 admitted with some form of cognitive impairment
- Experience increased stress, anxiety, confusion to environmental stimulus
- Vulnerable to adverse events & avoidable functional decline
- Staff stress & carer burden increased
- Time poor to support emotional & safety needs
- Carer participation in gaining personal info



Can a volunteer intervention assist in reducing the risk of falls for the confused elderly?



Dementia and Delirium Care with Volunteers Program

AIMS:

- To improve the emotional security and care for patients with cognitive impairment (dementia and delirium) and reduce their risk of adverse outcomes
- To assist and support staff and family carers in their care



Program structure

- Comprehensive volunteer training program
- Referral criteria and process
- Scope and boundaries for volunteer role
- Program procedures for staff and volunteers
- Volunteer documentation and communication



What the Volunteers do

Person centred care emotional security and support

- Finding out about the person – personal profile
- One to one emotional care & supporting interaction with others
- Touch through massage
- Engagement in therapeutic/enjoyable activities

Practical assistance and reducing delirium risk

- Assisting with and promoting eating and drinking
- Walking with patients
- Assisting with vision and hearing aids
- Supporting orientation



Volunteers as part of the care team - role similar to that of a family carer



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Background

- Pilot project implemented at Bega hospital in 2009 in partnership with Alzheimer's NSW
- Results
 - Trend towards a reduction in falls
 - High acceptability by nursing staff and volunteers with perceptions of improved safety and quality of care for patients
 - Anecdotal evidence of support for family carers
- Current roll out to 7 hospitals in SNSWLHD



Volunteer Interview – Kim Tozer

“The proof is in the pudding”



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Thank you

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