Reducing the Risk of Falls: Shropshire Case Study

What we did?

We hosted a Roundtable event in Shrewsbury with staff from surrounding areas invited to attend. The session was facilitated by Beth Britton and Nicola Payne. Our objectives for the session included:

- Factors that contribute to falls for people with a learning disability
- How falls impact upon the person, and particularly a person with dementia
- How to reduce the risk of falls, including environmental factors
- How to support general health to help prevent falls
- Supporting a person after a fall

What we learnt?

We used information from MacIntyre's Wellbeing for Life eBook: 'Reducing the Risk of Falls' to understand factors that could contribute towards falls with an important focus on prevention of falls. We also learnt that there's evidence that falls are more common in people with learning disabilities throughout their lives, not only as they age.

Falls are an important topic for staff in Shropshire and even though our total number of falls is very low, we are always looking to find ways to reduce the instances of falls. Staff have been extremely proactive in trying to find ways to do this, and were eager to pick up any more tips. We also learnt how falls should be accurately recorded on the online internal Software Recording System: AssessNET, and shared some factual information about falls that staff weren't aware of, including the statistic that, "A hospital stay of more than 10 days leads to 10 years' muscle ageing for people most at risk".

> —— **Did you know?** ——
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> There's a good article summarising the evidence in the current issue of the Tizard Learning Disability Review (Janet Finlayson) and a great resource pack from the same author and colleagues - downloadable here:
>
> hub.careinspectorate.com/media/291646/injury-and-fall-prevention-for-people-with-learning-disabilities-resource-guide.pdf)

We discussed an anonymised real life scenario of a gentleman MacIntyre support with a learning disability and dementia that related to the links between his medications, an increase in the number of falls he is having and how we might reduce his risk of falls, touching on topics such as his environment, hearing, eyesight, joint problems, staffing numbers and staff training.

We also talked about another real life scenario from Beth's wider work that involved a person on blood thinning medication who had a fall, and why staff would need to be particularly aware of the consequences of falling for a person in that situation.

> *"We learnt of more possible reasons for falls. There were great handouts, great group discussions and lots of information shared between services".- Elizabeth, Support Worker*

The handouts we offered staff included MacIntyre's resources: 'Reducing the Risk of Falls', 'Dementia Friendly Environments', 'Eating and Drinking'', 'Poly-pharmacy' and 'Changed Behaviour - Wakefulness & Disturbed Sleeping'. All of these resources will become available on MacIntyre's website in 2019.

What are we pleased about?

One of the things that we are most pleased about is that our Roundtable events enables colleagues from all different services to come together and the peer-to-peer learning it provides. Prior to roundtables, Beth and Nicola visited individual services to provide expert support, often sharing information about what other services were doing or had done. It was clear that learning from other services and colleagues was as beneficial as having one-to-one time with an expert consultant, and so the roundtable format was created to harness the best of both worlds.

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What are we pleased about?

There was really good attendance and engagement from staff at our Reducing the Risk of Falls Roundtable event, all of whom shared stories and experiences. Lots of practical ideas were discussed that could be implemented by services to reduce falls. It was also really helpful to have staff attending who have different roles, from the Area Manager to Frontline Support Workers, and we also had a representative from the Health and Safety team to provide perspective of how falls should be recorded and factors associated with recording falls was very beneficial for us all.

We are pleased of staff's understanding of reducing the risks of falls after the session, and that each member of staff made notes to go back and share with the rest of their teams.

Below is a quote from Nicola Payne summarising her experience of the day:

> "This Roundtable had a vast range of staff attend from Support Workers, Frontline Managers to having a member of the Health and Safety team attend to share their knowledge, which was just great to see. Poly Pharmacy was spoken about too, being able to discuss that medicines can affect a person's balance which could lead to a fall was an important learning point.
>
> Having Beth attend these sessions is vital as she is able to share her knowledge and expertise to staff, and they will take this back to their teams to pass on. I know from feedback that staff left feeling more confident and skilled ready to share what they learnt wider with their colleagues."
> *- Nicola Payne*

What next?

We will definitely continue with our Roundtable events in the future they appear to be really well received by staff and feedback is always fantastic. As a Health, Dementia and Wellbeing team we feel we are still learning what makes the best roundtable format, and we are very much open to suggestions from staff as to what they'd like so that we can tailor this learning experience to the needs of the staff attending roundtables in the future (see our Roundtable Guidance for more info on running your own Roundtable).

Useful Links:

→ https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs86

→ https://www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv/video-player.asp?guid=7f99fdd1-0e82-47c9-adb9-b939284397fc

Get in touch!

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f www.facebook.com/MacIntyreCharity1

in uk.linkedin.com/company/macintyre

▶ www.youtube.com/providingsupport

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