

Community Needs Driven Research Network

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Mental health related issues

Mental health related issues, and how to deal with them, were the highest priority item identified by front-line workers. These issues included:

1. Dealing with challenging or responsive behaviours
2. Care of non-dementia clients
3. Client Mix

This fact sheet will talk about the issues related to care of non-dementia clients and client mix. See Fact Sheet 01.1 for challenging/responsive behaviours.

Care of non- dementia clients

The care of non- dementia clients was also identified as a priority issue around mental health. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the continuing care (CC) sector provides services to not only seniors and clients with dementia, but also to clients with mental health-related diagnosis and disabilities such as clients with brain injuries or severe physical disabilities. Clients with diagnoses other than dementia often present challenging behaviours as well and staff are not properly trained to handle these behaviours. Participants felt that not enough research is focused on assessment and care planning for clients/residents, or into how to educate people to decrease stigma place on mental health issues.

What Front-line Workers said

“And I find that I have 111 clients, and I would say 85 percent of them have schizophrenia and the staff knowledge of that is very minimal... And we have staff coming in who don't have the first idea about schizophrenia or what it's about or what it's like.”

“We live in a culture where people with mental health issues aren't really recognized as having mental health issues, and even if they are, there's a large stigma around it. People aren't valued when they're seen to be crazy.”

“So when you have a dependency on an existing instrument now for assessment [MDS-RAI tools], are we adequately looking at those additional needs some of these clients have, and care-planning around them accordingly.”



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Client Mix

Client mix, which looks at the diverse needs and ages of residents, was also highlighted. Because of the mental health issues and needs (including episodes of depression in younger residents), front-line workers told us that research is needed in terms of best clinical practice and in standards of care and that staff need better support in dealing with these client/resident needs.



What Front-line Workers said

“I think oftentimes, we also have with the young adult unit, THEY refuse to accept the fact that they are here and they are going to stay here and that their condition is, in all honesty, probably not going to improve.”

“I can speak to a long term care facility, and it’s a secure unit but sometimes the mix of clients isn’t a fit because sometimes the new clients have different types of diagnosis than the other clients have and different specific needs.”

What are we doing about these issues?

The role of ICCER is to increase the visibility of research needs to a variety of audiences including researchers, providers, and families. We will disseminate information on these issues to a wide audience.

In addition, these two mental health issues are related to the issue of challenging/responsive behaviours of people with dementia. Please see Fact Sheet 01.1 for more information.