Moving a Dementia Program through Culture Change and into the Future

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Clark Retirement Community

- Continuum of Care
- Two campuses
- Five areas for persons living with dementia
- Four hundred plus staff
- Established in 1906
- CARF Accreditation in Dementia and Person-centered Care

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A Traditional Facility

- Stuck on tradition
- Staff directed
- Focus on groups of people with dementia
- Tasks key to everything that was done
- No consistent staffing and little accountability
- Management made all decisions

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Leadership identified a need to have a focus on those individuals living with dementia.

Hiring a champion to focus on dementia.

Hired consultants to get us started.

Picked the easiest area to start. Get a win.

Concentrated on a specific area for a year. Capturing successes and challenges and then moving to another level of care. Mentors following.

How the culture change began

- Started in a secured assisted living
- An environment that was isolated and uninviting
- Staff with longevity
- Staff focused on the task
- Staff worked in silos with nurses being very isolated from the residents and staff
- Families non-existent

Where it began

- Observations and monitors
- Learned the culture of the area and the employees
- Started with small groups and giving employees a voice
- Identified a large project to work on in each area
- Identify that the right people are in the right place
- Interview process
- Job descriptions
- Identified financial investments that were needed and potential revenue

The Process
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The Process

- Created a vision through a Dementia Vision group focusing on:
  - Education
  - Environment
  - Programming
  - Families
  - Staffing

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EDUCATION, EDUCATION!

- Developed a curriculum based on philosophy adopted by community
- Investing in education for all staff
- Recognize frontline staff by sending staff out for educational experiences
- Developing education for families and those connected to the person
- Educating the community at large

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Don’t Forget the Families

- Listening to the family/support people prior to admission
- Family meetings
- Education
- Building support
- Involving them in life at our community and decisions with next steps
- Focus groups
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**Programming: Creation of the Life Enrichment Specialist Team**

- Moving beyond Bingo
- Dedicated staff devoted to help us create well-being
- Mentoring
- Supporting
- Educating

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**Well-being**

- Autonomy
- Identity
- Security
- Joy
- Meaning
- Connectedness
- Growth

Dr. Allen Powers

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**Person-centered Living**

- Person-centered Living at Clark is being part of a community where my voice is valued, my life has purpose and I make choices about how I live every day. Clark nurtures my spirit and my need:
  - To be well-known,
  - To be in meaningful relationships,
  - To feel secure and,
  - To grow.
Clark is about living... residents, families, friends and staff.
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Going Beyond our Walls

- Support Groups
- Presentations
- Pathway to Caregiver Conference
- Summit
- Grand Rapids Dementia Friendly Community

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It Get's Tough, It's Not Easy

- Staying energized as a champion
- Need visionary people
- Keep focus on why we are here
- Human Resources
- Turnover
- Regulations as a threat to person-centered programs and care
- Validating what is being done is beneficial

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Don't dwell on the negative-move forward

- We can always do better
- Find some easy wins
- If it does not work it does not mean it was a failure
- Get away from behind the desk and spend time with the people you are working with so that you keep focused on the individual
- Take time to CELEBRATE!
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The Future

- A world where persons living with memory loss feel welcomed and are treated with dignity and respect
- A world without the word dementia
- A world where we all live together no matter what our differences are

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