Benefits of the PA Toolkit: a staff educator’s perspective

Hi, my name is Kris McAnelly. I’m a Nurse Practitioner and Educator in palliative and aged care. Since 2009, I’ve been involved in the development, pilot testing and rollout across Australia of the Residential Aged Care Palliative Approach Toolkit, which I’ll call the PA Toolkit in this video.

It’s a set of clinical, educational and management resources that can help residential aged care staff to provide proactive, high quality and person-centred care for residents requiring a palliative approach.

The resources in the PA Toolkit are practical, informative and accessible.

You’ll find resources suitable for residential aged care facility managers, clinical and care staff, and trainers. It also has some brochures appropriate for residents and their families.

The PA Toolkit is comprehensive, evidence-informed and designed specifically for Australian residential aged care facilities.

It’s been really useful in my work as a staff educator and trainer.

For example, the model of care underpinning the PA Toolkit - known as the ‘trajectories framework’ – is easy for staff to understand and implement on a day-to-day basis within their facilities.

Because the ‘framework’ is based on a resident’s estimated prognosis, I’ve noticed that it prompts a ‘light bulb moment’ during training sessions when staff recognise that about 95% of their residents would, in fact, benefit from a palliative approach to care. Also, the link between estimated prognosis and key clinical processes highlighted in the ‘trajectories framework’ gives staff a concrete place to start when considering the care of individual residents.

The focus on three key clinical processes within the PA Toolkit - advance care planning, the palliative care case conference and the use of an end of life care pathway - reinforces for staff the importance of effective communication between the resident, their family, and the RACF multidisciplinary team, and, most importantly, the central role that staff have in facilitating this communication.

I also find that using the Organisational Policies and Structures Audit in the PA Toolkit Workplace Implementation Guide as part of education sessions, helps staff to identify ‘strengths’ and ‘gaps’ in their approach to palliative care delivery.

And finally, I particularly think that the resources in the PA Toolkit focused on care provided in the last week of a resident’s life will contribute greatly to ensuring a ‘good death’ for the resident where symptoms are well managed and both the resident’s comfort and support for their family are paramount.

These resources include:

- The Residential Aged Care End of Life Care Pathway DVD
- The Pathway document itself; and

I strongly encourage you to use the PA Toolkit resources as part of your staff education and training activities. In the PA Toolkit Training Support Guide and on the PA Toolkit website, you’ll find suggestions about how to use each of the resources to implement a facility-wide palliative approach to care.

This is a transcript of a PA Toolkit video. To view the video visit www.caresearch.com.au/PAToolkit