

Dementia Through the Lens of COVID-19: Lessons Learned from a Home Care Provider Perspective

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PRESENTED BY:





Home Care Network

HEALTH ASSOCIATION NOVA SCOTIA

- Network of home nursing and home support agency administrators and directors.
 - Membership includes
 - For profit & not for profit
 - Rural and urban
 - Small and large agencies
- Connect regularly to discuss & address sector wide issues in Home Care
- Supported by Health Association Nova Scotia

Lessons Learned via the HC Provider Perspective

- Gathered information from the various home care service providers on the following:
 - Operational and care giving barriers/challenges
 - Key insights and lessons learned
 - Future planning
 - Positive outcomes
 - Acts of kindness

Operational/Caregiving Challenges

- Operational
 - Lack of PPE available
 - Reduced staffing & having to reduce the number of staff entering client homes
 - Lack of dedicated infection prevention & control specialist with familiarity of sector
 - Could only offer short respite visits for families due to staffing
 - Reliance on the internet & social media platforms for communicating public health information created problems for those without access or knowledge
 - Screening clients was complicated process

Operational Caregiving Challenges

- Caregiving
 - Clients feared PPE (some indicated staff resembled aliens)
 - Client routines were significantly disrupted & caused anxiety
 - Clients/families not understanding or ignoring public health requirements

Key Insights

- Time & understanding is key
 - Most clients/ families/caregivers eventually came to accept public health requirements
 - Maintain a clear, calm & consistent message
 - Acquire supplies early and allow staff to use as much as they needed to feel safe
- Staffing fears must dealt with upfront & carefully
- Important to impart a culture of learning in order to more readily accept change & mistakes

Lessons Learned

- Being prepared is critical
 - Preparing staff for the unique needs of clients/families with dementia
 - Better understanding of the fears & anxieties clients with dementia might experience
- Knowledge, information & resource sharing among agencies is critical.
 - Having an outlet for talking about issues & challenges was very important.
 - Regular & consistent communication with families & caregivers was critical

Lessons Learned & Future Planning

- Knowledge & resource sharing is critical to future planning
- Frequent formal & informal communication
- We are stronger than we think & will always get through
- Future planning requires
 - Flexible & nimble strategy
 - Willingness to share information
 - Staying connected to government

Positive Outcomes

- Clients/families/caregivers expressed their gratitude for ongoing support
 - Greater understanding of the value of Home Care staff
- More universal understanding of infection prevention & control
- More personal & stronger relationships with clients & families
- Greater family involvement in client care
- Greater relationship with sector partners (NSH, DHW)
- Greater trust among everyone

Acts of Kindness

- Frontline workers received discounts at retailers & various community stores.
- Masks were made for staff & clients/families by community groups.
- Staff members who stayed late to ensure their director made it home safely.
- Community support (waves, public acknowledgement and “hidden” smiles).

QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?