



Personal Outcomes Stories during COVID: Learning from practice

Your role and organisation: Lorna Nicholson, Speech and Language Therapist, NHS Fife

How have you been able to keep a focus on what matters to people during COVID?



The service as a whole has responded to the extra barriers both staff and patients are experiencing with communication and has produced a folder with advice and tools to support communication and ensure we are focussing on What Matters To You (WMTY).

We have printed off our face/name stickers to go on PPE to help identify ourselves and connect at a more personal level despite the barrier of PPE.

The WMTY and patient story/outcome ethos has been embedded in this work where it is acknowledged that wellbeing supports recovery.

These conversations are happening more regularly and more effectively in some settings compared to others. However, I think it might now be easier to build on this work in some settings.

What have you had to do differently and what made this possible?

Produced information and tools to encourage good conversations despite difficult circumstances. Encouraged whole team, including for example, nursing students, to have good conversations focussing on what would make a difference to the patient and improve their day/stay in hospital. Most of this is around encouraging social chatting and using technology to see/chat to loved ones.

The excellent support and information from NHS Fife psychological services have supported an ethos of connecting with people, being kind, listening well. I think these additional tools and learning opportunities will support staff to have better, more outcome focussed conversations with patients and colleagues.

We have also been well supported with technology and management to stay connected virtually to both patients and colleagues. We are using TEAMS and attend anywhere/near me virtual meetings and appointments.

What have you noticed that has been better?

Understanding how important it is to look after our wellbeing and that this is often to do with feeling connected with people important to us and being able to participate in meaningful activities. Wellbeing is clearly related to “feeling better” despite possible chronic conditions and disabilities.

I have found communication with my management team and the bigger organisation very supportive. What I found helpful was the regular but clear messages and information sent out by my management team as well as the CEO. The information has many references to us as people trying to do our best in difficult circumstances with ‘permission’ to acknowledge our anxieties and to take time to self care. The language has embraced a very human and personal touch including self disclosure.

Virtual meetings and therapy sessions are very helpful for some colleagues and patients. It can be easier/more efficient for colleagues to be involved and work on things ‘live’ (possible through TEAMS) and it can be easier for patients to attend therapy where there are physical and psychological barriers.

How did this make you feel?

I feel positive that some ways of working have been embraced more quickly and widely than may have been the case without the pandemic circumstances.

Current work supporting this crisis validates the ongoing work around personal outcomes and good conversations.

What have you learned through this?

A crisis moves thinking forward more quickly!

People are actually very flexible and it feels that we have adapted very well to changes in practices which keep us connected. But this adaptation has been well supported as previously mentioned.