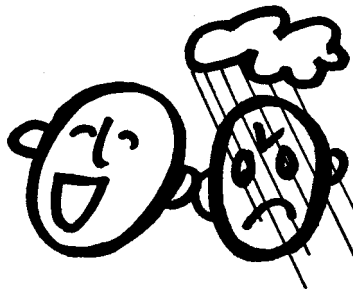


Person Centred Thinking Tool 7

Good days and bad days

We all have good days and bad days. What amounts to a good day for you may equate to someone else's bad day. Your good day may start with listening to hip-hop music as you get up. For others, anything other than the soothing tones of classical music or catching up with the news would be the beginning of a bad day. Many older people (those in hospital, those attending or receiving services on a regular basis, and those who live in communal settings) have been subjected to other people's choice of morning music, with little thought about the impact of this.

One of the ways to discover how best to support someone is to ask about their good days and their bad days. The staff who support Alice spent time thinking about what makes a good day and a bad day for Alice. They used this to identify the best ways to support her, so that she has more good days.





Alice Peacock

Alice has an ever ready smile. She is a gentle woman, who lives in a residential home. She never complains. This makes it more challenging to discover what a bad day looks like, so staff based their account of this on when they have seen Alice looking sad or distressed. Here's their list of what makes a good day for Alice.

What makes a good day for Alice?

- People taking the time to chat with her.
- Having visitors from church.
- Having flowers in a vase in her bedroom.
- Having chocolates with soft fillings to eat.
- Jim and Edith (her brother and his wife) visiting.
- June bringing the church newsletter and somebody

sitting and reading through it with her.

- Going outside for a short walk if she wants to.
- A bath with bubbles.

What makes a bad day for Alice?

- Feeling confused and worried when she believes her mother is waiting at home for her and she cannot get out of the front door.
- Being afraid her mother will be very vexed with her for not going home.
- Wandering around the home in a state of confusion.
- Being hot, flushed and breathless.
- Nobody chatting to her.

From this information, and from talking to Jim, Edith and June, the staff developed the list of what is important to Alice



Important to Alice

- Living in the Millbrook area
- see Alice's graphic history. Her whole life centres around living in Millbrook.
- To have company and live with other people who like her. She will say: 'I'm all right here with the gang' - meaning the other people who live at the home.
- To chat with staff and the other residents.
- To see June each month, and for June to bring her the church newsletter.
- To be able to go outside for a walk whenever she wants to.
- To see Jim and Edith every week.
- To hug people she cares about.
- To have fresh flowers in her bedroom all the time.
- To have soft centred chocolate and sweets when she wants them.

- For staff to acknowledge Alice each time they pass by her.
- To have a bath with bubbles in and having water poured over her back at least three times a week.

The staff separated what matters to Alice from the best ways to support her. This included information that was not just about Alice's good and bad days, but also what they knew needed to happen to keep Alice healthy, safe and well

How best to support Alice

- Ensure she wears her built-up slippers.
- Read the church newsletter with her; she struggles to read it alone. Share her enthusiasm and pleasure in hearing what is happening within the church community, of which she was once at the heart.
- Always acknowledge Alice. She will beam at you and probably say, "Eeh, well, fancy

seeing you here.” She will then laugh. Have a chat with her, be interested in what she has to say. She will tell you so much about her life. Ask her to show you her history map – she will enjoy telling you her tales. Alice was a keen birdwatcher in the past; she may like talking about it.

- When Alice is having meat in her meals, it must be cooked until very tender.
- Alice struggles to eat fruit with skin on such as grapes, but enjoys bananas and tinned fruit.
- Alice will almost always say hello when you walk by her. Always acknowledge her, as she will forget that you have already said hello.
- Be aware that Alice may be a little low once Jim and Edith leave after a visit
- When you are in the room and Alice says, “Oy, oy, oy” she wants you to acknowledge her and have a chat.
- If Alice’s glasses have slipped down her nose, ask her if she would like you to push them up for her.

When Alice is confused, she is more likely to have a bad day, so staff added a separate section on how to support Alice then.

How best to support Alice when she is confused

- If she becomes breathless, her face is flushed and she feels hot, help Alice take her blanket off her knee and take her cardigan off.
- If she is looking for her, do not remind Alice that her mother is no longer alive as this will distress her further. Instead, try to comfort Alice by sitting and chatting with her. She will often think staff are people from her past and enjoys chatting away to them. This will distract her from trying to get out of the front door to get home to her mother. She will become more and more anxious that her mother doesn’t know where she is and she will be vexed with Alice when she gets home. Good support would mean taking Alice’s mind off the subject and just being with her, chatting and listening to her.
- Sometimes, when she is worried her mother is searching for her, a bubble bath helps Alice to relax.
- Showing Alice books with pictures of birds may take her mind off her anxieties and calm her.
- Ask if she wants to go outside for a walk. She find this

relaxing and will soon be ready for a rest and a cup of tea or coffee.

How can this tool be useful?

Exploring good days and bad days can:

- Help us learn what needs to be present and absent in a person's life.
- Help us learn what is important to a person and how to best support them.
- Tell us who the person has more good days with, who best supports them, and may identify the characteristics the person wants in these people.
- Provide information to people who do not know the person well. Staff turnover means that information gets lost, which is all the more reason for recording it.
- Enable people to make changes in their own life to help them have more good days.

This information can be used to inform assessments, care plans and support plans. It can also be used in reviews to better understand how to support people in the future.

It can be used to frame questions and discussions about specific treatment plans - for example to understand how treatments, equipment or other aids and adaptations are affecting someone's health and wellbeing.

But it is also a really useful tool for people to use on their own as well as with others. However this is used, it must be led by the older person and any record of these discussions must reflect how they define 'good day' and 'bad day'.

