Activating Potential for Communication

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The aim of Sonas is to activate each individual's potential for communication whatever that potential might be.
Activity - Communication
Aims of Workshop

- Background of Sonas aPc
  - What is Sonas aPc?
  - Who is Sonas aPc for?
- The Sonas aPc Approach
- Communication
- Benefits of Sonas aPc
- Integrating the Sonas Approach into a hospital setting
Sonas aPc

• Pioneered in 1990 by Sister Mary Threadgold, a Dublin based Sister of Charity and Speech and Language Therapist

• A multi-sensory way of activating potential for communication

• The word Sonas is Gaelic and translates as well-being, joy and contentment
Background to Sonas aPc

- Sonas aPc is a method of activating potential for communication.
- The essential features of the approach are:
  - The use of a multi-sensory environment
  - Focus on communication
  - Use of structure and repetition
  - Focus on abilities
- The session provide cognitive, sensory and social stimulation.
Background to Sonas aPc – Aims and Values

• Sonas aPc values the individuality and dignity of older people
• It is grounded in the right of each older person to respect, choice and privacy.
• Aims include:
  • To activate whatever potential for communication that is retained by an older person with communication impairment.
  • To encourage the creation of an environment which will facilitate communication.
  • To have activation of potential for communication recognised and accepted as an essential part of care planning for older people
Background to Sonas aPc – Who is Sonas aPc for?

- Sonas aPc is aimed at older people with a cognitive impairment.
- SIMS (the Sonas Individual Multi-Sensory Sessions) is an adaptation of the Sonas group session for use in the family home.
Common Symptoms of Dementia

Include problems with:

• Memory

• Communication – word finding difficulties, understanding what is said, whilst the verbal aspect of communication is affected the non-verbal channel is better preserved e.g. Facial expression, tone of voice, body language

• Perception
Communication Difficulties

Christine Bryden in her book, “Dancing with Dementia – my story of living positively with dementia” 2005 writes:

“We know what we want, but we can’t say it. In my view we are not cognitively impaired but communication impaired. Speaking, reading, writing, numbers have all become scrambled.”
Decreased Stimulation

Diminished social occupational functioning

Disrupted Communication

Confusion & Misunderstanding

Impaired memory

Dementia

ISOLATION
The Sonas aPc Approach

“We all have a primary need for sensory stimulation and people with dementia are no different” Meester 1998, MacDonald 2002)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reception</th>
<th>Processing</th>
<th>Expression</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stimulus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sense (received)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Perception (understood)</strong></td>
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<td>Mixing the ingredients for a Christmas cake</td>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>Christmas Spices</td>
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The Senses in Communication

“If the loop of communication has any beginning, it starts with our senses”
(O’Connor & Seymour 1999)
Benefits of Sonas aPc

1. Communication
2. Awareness
3. Initiative
4. Relaxation and enjoyment
5. Interaction
6. Self worth and positive attitude
7. Time
8. Individuality
9. Abilities
10. Reminiscence
Applying Sonas aPc to our Hospital Setting

- Multi-disciplinary group training
- Multi-disciplinary support therefore ensuring the group continued
- Support from ward managers, family, carers
- Ensuring a suitable environment
- Funding
- Time and effort
Feedback

Recently Mr P has been going to the Sonas group which I have also attended and I have been amazed at how much more aware he has become there. He has begun to attempt to join in the activities and is certainly responding to what is going on. The staff running the group make it entertaining for the patients and they definitely seem to be getting benefit from the group.