



Green Walking Project Case Study

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde: Out and About Group

Project Description

At NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, an established walking group supports acute inpatient adults. It is important for mental health patients to access physical activity and benefits of nature like fresh air. In order to set up and support the group, occupational therapists (OTs) had an informal discussion with senior staff and provided feedback at weekly meetings. Risk assessment checklists also need to be completed for each patient.

The group consists of an OT, OT support workers, and five patients. This number is based on the transport capacity and maintaining a ratio of at most 3 patients to 1 staff member. The session is offered once a week on Wednesday afternoon. This session is suitable for patients interested in walking, being out of the ward, and/or need a distraction from the ward environment. On Monday afternoon, occupational therapists identify appropriate patients for the group and approach them about joining the group in a 1-1 engagement. In the conversation, the OT tries to find out what the patient would want from a walking group if interested. On Wednesday morning, the OT conducts a risk assessment checklist for the patients to ensure they are fit for the walk. Then patients embark on one hour of walking, with two hours set aside total to include transport time. The walking group leaves the hospital grounds to go to Springburn Park or Hogganfield Loch. Patients decide which routes to go on for the walks.

The evaluation of the project consists of getting feedback from patients through an Emotional Touch Points Feedback Form administered by senior staff every two months for participants of the group. The intention is to use the feedback to improve the activities of the group.

Benefits

Patient outcomes: Research has indicated that access and engagement to green spaces boost patient well-being and encourage healthy behaviours (Branching Out, 2009).

Environmental/Financial: Establishing and maintaining a walking group is a low resource intensive activity for a hospital. The walking group demonstrates value placed into green spaces and the need to protect them.

Social: By providing a means to access green space and engage in physical activity, staff have noticed that this provides an opportunity for patients to discuss what has been troubling them. The walking group allows the patients to explore other places and a change of scenery from the ward. Based on informal feedback, patients seem to be enjoying themselves. The walking group also allows for socialisation to increase among patients and allows them to build their social networks.

Financial Appraisal

The project receives funding from the NHS at about £30/week.

Barriers encountered

Challenges to operating the walking group were:

- Organising transport to and from the site
- Having suitable weather for walking outdoors
- The risks of patients being out in the green space
- The physical ability of patients and staff to attend
- Acquiring a budget for the walking group (i.e. tea and transport)

Risks

Risk assessment forms must be completed for patients to ensure that they are fit for participating in the walking group as the patients could get hurt on the walk.

For more information please contact:

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References

Branching Out. (2009). *Branching Out: Resource Guide Greenspace and Conservation on Referral*. Forestry Commission Scotland. Retrieved from <https://www.gcvgreennetwork.gov.uk/publications/237-branching-out-resource-guide-greenspace-and-conservation-on-referral>