From Discovering to Dreaming: Discovery Themes and Culture Change Dreams at Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care

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Culture Change in Long-term Care (LTC) Homes

Culture change relating to care provision has received considerable attention in recent years, particularly within the long-term care (LTC) sector (e.g., Baker, 2007; Fagan, 2003; Hill, Klatzanowski, Milone-Nuzzo & Yevich, 2011; Wolowshi & Rader, 2010; Pioneer Network, 2011; Thomas, 2003). Culture change in LTC homes usually involves a shift from the medical, institutional model of care towards a relational, community model of living. A relational, community model of living emphasizes the values of choice and self-determination; dignity and respect; the nurturance of mind, body and spirit; personhood; close interdependent relationships, collaborative decision-making; purposeful living; and enabling, normalizing environments (Fagan, 2003; Hill et al., 2011). In creating this shift, culture change processes encourage the meaningful participation of residents, families, and staff in decision-making about care.

The Partnerships in Dementia Care (PiDC) Alliance, Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care in Markham, ON, and its stakeholders are engaged in a participatory process of culture change to improve dementia care. The process is led by a Culture Change Coalition (CCC) composed of residents, family members, staff, and co-researchers and uses an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach. The objectives of this presentation are to describe: (1) our collaborative methods in developing discovery themes; (2) how we transitioned from Discovery Themes to Dreaming alternative futures; and (3) our collective dreams and aspiration statements.

Methods

Residents, staff, family members, and community partners were asked in the second phase of the AI process to Discover the strengths of their organization. This was accomplished through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. In the third phase of the AI process - Dream - the CCC dreamed what could be. The CCC collaboratively analyzed Discovery and Dream data using thematic analysis.

Discovery Themes: Appreciating Yee Hong’s Strengths

Discovery energizes a team as it asks CCCs to reflect on appreciative stories described by residents, staff, family members, and community members. The CCC at Yee Hong identified five Discovery themes.

Honouring Culture and Diversity. We excel at honouring culture and diversity by welcoming all cultural and ethnic backgrounds; embracing the importance of celebration; and appreciating food.

Trusting in Accountable & Responsive Leadership. Yee Hong’s leadership is progressive, honest, sincere, and action-oriented, especially when concerns or requests are raised. Further, we feel Yee Hong’s strength in leadership can be attributed to being willing to go “above and beyond” by “seeking out new methods in long-term care,” engaging stakeholders, and making them feel connected to what is happening at Yee Hong.

Going the Extra Mile to Better Resident Care. Yee Hong’s excellence in resident care is made possible by providing reliable, flexible, and dedicated care; focusing on responsive, resident-centred care; and nurturing loving, attentive, and compassionate care relationships with residents. By going the extra mile in support of better resident care, stakeholders of Yee Hong are championing a strong reputation for excellence in quality of care.

Recognizing and Showing Appreciation of All Stakeholders. We are maintaining a respectful and safe atmosphere in our living and working spaces and continue being proud of all contributions that take place at Yee Hong.

Ensuring Yee Hong “Feels like Home”. We are focused on having engaging, meaningful, and inclusive activities and social experiences for everyone; ensuring everyone feels comfortable and relaxed; fostering strong connections; working together; committing to open communication; and keeping a clean, safe, spacious, and accessible environment.

Aspiration Statements as Guideposts for the Future

Aspiration Statement 1: At Yee Hong we are committed to fostering accessible and inclusive education, trusting relationships, and supportive partnerships with all partners in care.

Dream: Creating more of a home-like environment (including food, recreation, and leisure).

Aspiration Statement 2: Yee Hong is a place where everyone can enjoy life to their fullest in a fun, safe, flexible home-like environment, where choices are honoured and respected.

Dream: Exploring ways to include others to support residents/increased staffing/flexible staffing options.

Aspiration Statement 3: At Yee Hong we are dedicated to engaging partners in care in supporting staff to provide all residents with consistent quality care.

Dream: Expand on-site health and wellness services available, and continue to ensure everyone’s safety.

Aspiration Statement 4: Yee Hong and its partners in care are dedicated to promoting holistic services that enhance the safety, health and wellness of its community.

Designing a LTC Home Future

Using the aspiration statements as guideposts, the CCC at Yee Hong have begun to plan in the fourth phase of AI - Design - where the CCC will realize how their aspirations can be put into action (through Yee Hong’s organization-wide strategic plan, community-level knowledge translation; and the development of culture change indicators, for example) to improve the future of dementia care at Yee Hong.

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The purpose of the discovery phase is to understand what gives life to an organization when it is at its best. Information gathered from this presentation are to describe: (1) our collaborative methods in developing discovery themes; (2) how we transitioned from Discovery Themes to Dreaming alternative futures; and (3) our collective dreams and aspiration statements.

Aspiration Statement 1, 2, 3, 4

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