

Notes from Open Space Topic Convenors

What was your topic or practice?

Using aromatherapy with cognitively impaired people.

What were major discussion points?

- Oils are inhaled or absorbed through the skin, which bypasses cognitive processes. They impact the emotional, spiritual, and physical arenas of the person. The use of the oils was driven by a need to provide comfort to cognitively impaired residents in a care center.
- Oils should be combined in formulas that address specific needs, i.e., agitation.
- Use of oils in lotions promotes healing relationships between caregiver and care receiver by allowing touch and conversation. Oils trigger memories that can be shared as the oils are applied.

What did you learn?

Recommendations:

- Add oils to lotions, massaging by caregivers builds healing relationships.
- Use scents on hankies, pillowcases, etc. to provide stimulation or relaxation.
- The use of 24-hour diffusers allows the right oil combinations to be used at optimal times of day/night.
- Oils have antibacterial properties, which can aid caregivers and care receivers.
- Therapeutic quality oils should be used. Do not use “over the counter, mall-type” oils.
- The oils are natural but still have side effects and contraindications. Allergies, emotional triggers, and person likes/dislikes must be taken into consideration.
- Oils need to be viewed as medicines, not a harmless substance.
- If a caregiver is sensitive to the oil needed by the care receiver, mask or gloves need to be used by caregiver.

How do we implement this facility-wide?

- Consult an aromatherapy professional for an assessment and recommendations for your area of proposed use.
- Draft a proposal, which includes initial set-up costs and training of caregivers.
- Describe how aromatherapy works, the science behind it.
- Illustrate how it is cost-effective over the long-term and is a non-invasive therapy.
- Include how this program builds healing relationships between caregivers and care receivers.
- Describe how the program will benefit the caregivers and visitors to the area where aromatherapy is being used. Reducing infections, colds, etc... as well as improving emotional well-being.

- A program for the education and support of caregivers who view this therapeutic program as something they would like to implement and maintain.

Whom should we contact for more information?

Name: Mary Gould
Telephone: 425/432-5039
Address: PO Box 1193
Maple Valley, WA 98038
Email: margou@sosnet.net

Who helped create this new practice?

Aromatherapists around the world!