

Cheering Voices

Description

Improving quality of life (QOL) and having high quality healthcare outcomes are the focus for nursing home providers and their regulatory bodies. The families, patient caregivers, physicians, and healthcare providers also want the highest quality and the best outcome for each person.

The Cheering Voices Program is an innovative approach that requires collaboration between nursing home residents, staff, caregivers and families for quality of life improvement in nursing homes. While this voluntary program implemented in October of 2015, was designed to improve the quality of life specifically for residents suffering from Alzheimer's and other memory disorders, it is not limited to Dementia residents. Any resident may participate and enjoy its benefits.

Professional musicians together with trained facilitators engage both the nursing home residents and their caregivers/families. The facilitators encourage resident's involvement during live musical sessions by singing along, dancing, using hand-held musical instruments, smiling, using positive statements, and gentle but active movements. A staff lead or designated "Voice Resource" participates in the assessment process, reviews the data, and provides input for the post project report.

As memory disorders progress, individuals lose the ability to share thoughts and gestures of affection with their loved ones but they retain the ability to move to the beat until very late in the disease process. The resident's level of activity can increase immediately during the session by starting slowly with slight head swaying and moving, and then may advance to quickly tapping of feet and clapping along to the music. Some people have a much more profound response and even begin dancing and singing along. These results improve QOL and help the provider achieve their goal of better outcomes. Another important point to note is that the program helps build better personal relationships between staff and residents in nursing homes suffering from Alzheimer's and other Dementias.

Quality Improvement Outcome

Our goals for the residents are to use the experience to create positive mood shifts, manage stress induced agitation, facilitate cognitive function, coordinate small motor movements, and stimulate positive interactions between the residents and their caregivers/families. During these shared live music sessions, all involved come together to experience the joy and power of music. Participation in the program gives them the opportunity to connect with one another when Alzheimer's deprives its victims of traditional forms of closeness.

The Cheering Voices program works to produce the following results:

- Reduction in anxiety
- Reduction in antipsychotic medication usage
- Reduction in antianxiety and hypnotic medication usage
- Increase in appetite, therefore decreasing excessive weight loss
- Increase in movement, therefore becoming more independent in activities of daily living

The Cheering Voices supports both the focus of the *National Quality Strategy* and key goals of the *CMS Quality Strategy* initiatives for nursing homes striving to improve their quality levels.

The Cheering Voices has received overwhelming positive responses from each of its participating facilities that help confirm that residents have an increase in QOL measures following program sessions. (See attached.)

How to Participate

Please contact the Cheering for Charity Foundation at (513) 827-2597 or info@cheeringforcharity.org to discuss project participation. Program is currently available in Hamilton, Warren and Butler counties. Applications may be submitted at any time for agreed upon 9-week program of 6 musical / interactive sessions.

Description of Required Activities

- Register for the project through a participation agreement signed by the administrator
- Have HIPAA release form signed copies for all program members and volunteers
- Appoint a staff lead for the project and a “Voice Resource” for each shift
- Have participating staff attend required training session
- Provide staffing, residents (minimum 12, maximum 40, per session), space and time for a weekly hour-long six-week music session
- Appoint a staff lead or designated “Voice Resource” who will participate in the assessment process, review data and report progress back to nursing home administration

Cheering Voices Program Methodology

Baseline assessments of the participating residents are obtained prior to the first week’s music session. A review is conducted of each participant’s diagnosis, current medications, and most recent cognitive ax results. A brief interview with caregiver or family member is performed by the Clinical Director or designee. The participants are then entered into the Results Measurement Process.

A QOL Assessment report is completed by the Cheering Voices Clinical Director or designee during each musical session in weeks 1 through 6. Final music session includes refreshments and a visit from the Cheering for Charity Foundation’s ‘Cheering Closet’ volunteers who bring small gifts and personal care items for all the residents in the nursing home.

Detailed resident assessments are obtained on site by the Clinical Director at the designated time points of 9 and 12 weeks. A final site visit is made following the 12th week for review of outcomes. The report presentation is shared with the facility’s program lead.

Evidence of Participation in the Project

“Expected evidence of participation in the project should be kept by the nursing home for use in state survey to demonstrate compliance with Sec. 3721.072 (B) which states that “Beginning July 1, 2013, each nursing home shall participate every two years in at least one of the quality improvement projects included on the list made available by the department of aging under the nursing home quality initiative established under section 173.60 of the Revised Code.”

Providers can meet this requirement by maintaining the following documents provided by Cheering Voices for their records:

1. Copy of signed participation agreement
2. Copies of baseline resident assessment data
3. Copies of weekly QOL assessments
4. Results reports following program completion

Resources Available to Participants

- Training for up to six staff members
- Program assessment tools
- Quality and Outcomes Report results
- On-Site support visits if implementing program replication

Contact

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Stakeholder Feedback

Dr. Robert S. Keyes, MD, Co-Director of The Christ Hospital Health & Aging Center and Geriatric and Internal Medicine Specialist, in Cincinnati, Ohio; has served as one of our key advisors and instructors. He states:

“Current research studies indicate that one of the most important therapies in maintaining brain health is cognitive stimulation. Music provides such stimulation and engages the brain while providing an enjoyable activity. Music therapy has also been observed to help quiet the agitation associated with dementia. I have had the privilege of working with the Cheering for Charity Foundation for several years and I admire their commitment to patients and families afflicted by dementia. I expect that the Cheering Voices program will continue to be as successful as all of their other endeavors.”

Participant Comments

“Music inspires each of us. It is an important thread in the fabric of our lives. As we age, this inspiration is more necessary than ever before. Cheering Voices helps to assure that patients with cognitive disorders can continue to cherish musical experiences while experiencing an enhanced quality of life. We are grateful for the work that Cheering Voices and Cheering for Charity does to help those living with memory impairment.”

Kim Majick, Executive VP, Marketing and Admissions – Carespring Healthcare Management, Cincinnati, Ohio

“It is the most interactive and engaging program for those with dementia I have ever seen and I have worked in the field of aging for almost thirty years. To give a few examples: Residents who never attend large group activities come to Cheering Voices. Residents who constantly wander sit still for a whole hour while in Cheering Voices. It is far and above the most favorite activity program here at Artis of Mason.”

Diane Kloenne, MGS, LNHA, Executive Director - Artis Senior Living, Mason, Ohio

“The Barrington of West Chester truly appreciates the Cheering Voices program for our residents. Our independent/assisted living community includes residents with dementia. We have especially noticed the participation and thorough enjoyment of the program effects on our residents with dementia. Cheering Voices makes them feel comfortable and connected with songs they recognize. In many cases it is the only activity they feel comfortable with and participate.”

Lisa Fey Director of Sales and Marketing, Senior Lifestyle Corporation, Barrington of West Chester, Ohio