

Stakeholder Inclusion in Practice Change - CHOICE University of Lethbridge

CHOICE+ is a program that was created by a research team led by Dr. Heather Keller at the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging in collaboration with partners in long-term care. The program adopts a relationship-centred approach to mealtimes. Essentially, this means mealtimes are a time for developing and sustaining relationships between residents and staff and among residents, family members and volunteers. Emotional and physical support is given and received by all at the meal, making the mealtime an enjoyable experience that has purpose and meaning.

Using a stakeholder engagement model of change, Dr. Sienna Caspar and Erin Davis of the University of Lethbridge implemented CHOICE+ at St. Michaels Health Centre. Thus, this project involved the collaboration of residents, staff and family members from St. Michaels with research teams from the University of Lethbridge and the Research Institute for Aging. Together, they have been working to deliver an engaging mealtime experience that is more homelike and encourages social interaction among all people involved.



Gayle is just one example of how family members have become involved in Choice+. She often comes in to St Michaels at mealtimes to serve juice and visit with the residents.

The program was set into motion with the formation of a Process Improvement Team (PIT). This team is made up of researchers, caregivers, family members and other stakeholders. Through weekly meetings, the PIT team has established goals for the project and selected changes that can be immediately implemented.

Many changes have taken place since the project began. Some of these changes include:

- Rearrangement of the tables
- Participation of residents in prep and cleanup of meals
- Introduction of a Juice Cart
- Background music
- Leaving the cleanup of dishes until everyone has finished eating
- Addition of spices to the unit
- Removal of Med Cart from the dining area



How have these changes been beneficial?

Since the introduction of CHOICE+, residents are now more involved in mealtimes. The rearrangement of the tables has made conversation easier, as no resident is isolated at their own table. They are also given the choice of where they would like to sit at the table. Residents, who are able, assist in setting tables and cleaning up. Each resident is asked what they would like to drink from the juice cart. Music is played in the background at a comfortable volume to allow for conversation, which is a pleasant addition to the mealtime atmosphere. Leaving dishes and other meal related tasks until the end of the meal enables care aides to sit down with the residents while they are eating. This allows the care aides to assist where needed, while also engaging socially with the residents at the table. The addition of spices to the unit means residents are given the option to add flavor to their meal. The distraction of meds at mealtimes is removed by placing the Med Cart outside of the dining area. When possible, medications are not given until after the meal is finished so the focus remains on the meal.



Lita, a Food Services Worker, prepares and plates the resident's food so that the HCA's can spend more time with the residents.

Note from St. Michaels Management

At St. Michaels Health Centre, it is our goal to provide the highest quality care to the residents we serve by utilizing a patient and family centered care approach. The CHOICE+ program supports this approach by shifting our focus from “doing for” to “doing with”, taking a holistic approach to the care being provided, and helping us make connections that are more meaningful to our residents. We are thankful to have the opportunity to partner with the University of Lethbridge, and are excited about the positive impact the meal enhancement project has had on our residents.

Family Involvement

Our husbands are in care at St Mike's, and like everyone else, we love them and want the best for them, despite their disease. CHOICE+ encourages the front-line staff to take the time to support and to sit and visit with our loved ones. HCAs have a lot of responsibilities and besides serving and giving assistance, they must also look after personal care, cleaning and laundry. We help by taking care of the small tasks, knowing that each small task we do frees the HCAs to do something else. We help put plates on the table and help to remove them. We can offer refreshments with the juice cart and help serve coffee and snacks. We sit and visit at the table or work on puzzles and share pictures and stories. Yes, our husbands live at St. Michaels, but they also live in a community. We do not see ourselves as visitors or volunteers, but as a part of the community.

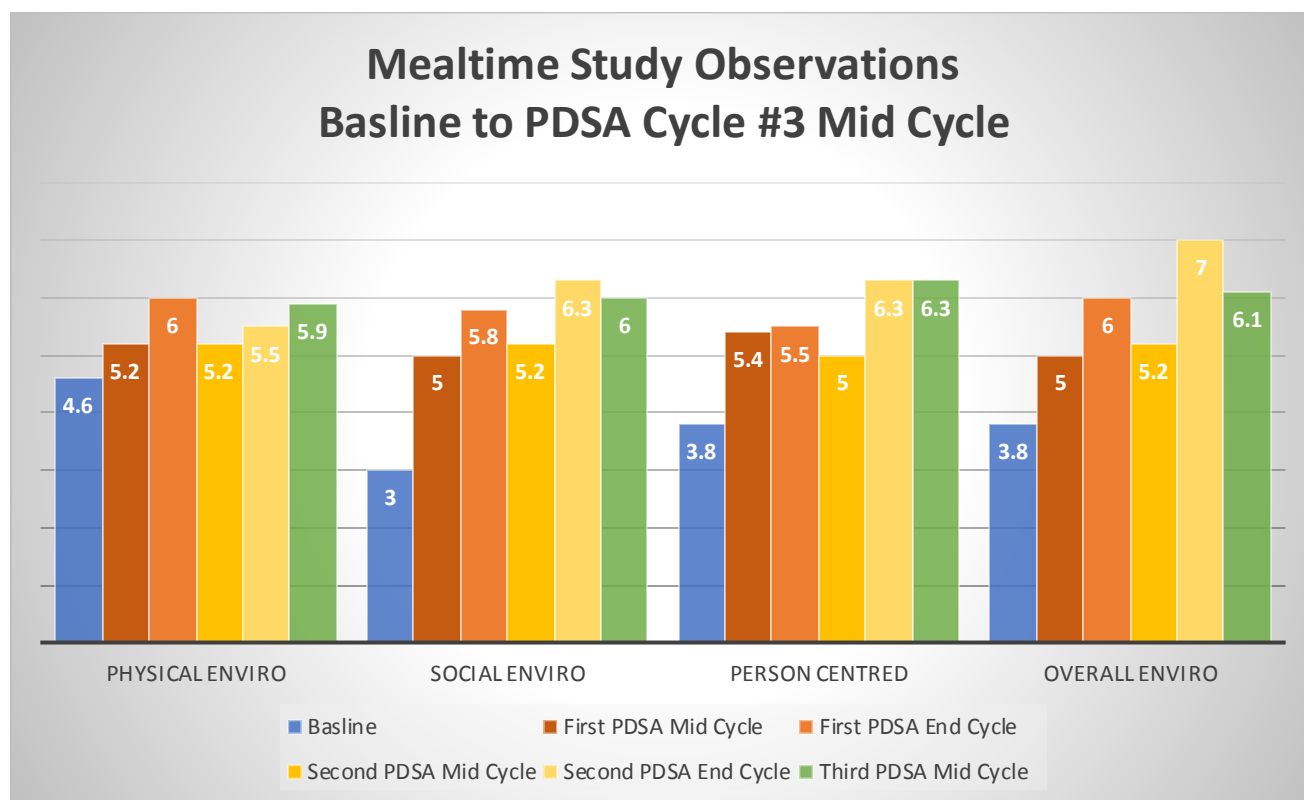
Gayle Pilling and Deb Rakos

Measuring Success

Measuring success has been done by researchers using the Mealtime Scan 2.0 created to measure changes in mealtime activities for long-term care units. This scan, created by Dr. Heather Keller and her team, can be used to create a visual representation of improvements over time in three principal areas (see chart below). First, the research team looked at the physical environment, which consisted of evaluating things like orientation cues (e.g., the strength of the foods smell, lighting, noise levels, and temperature).

Second, the team evaluated the social environment by looking at the mix of social interactions taking place during the mealtimes compared to task focused interactions. Third, the team assessed person-centered practices. This included things like how dignified relationships were between residents, staff and family, whether or not most interactions were relationship focused, and how involved residents were in mealtime activities. Looking at all three measures, researchers can determine a global assessment of the overall mealtime experience. As seen in the chart below, residents, staff and family have greatly improved mealtime experiences at St. Michaels Health Care Centre. Meals involve more social engagement and are less task focused. We have seen significant increases in person-centered care as demonstrated by the improvements in the overall meal experiences.

The team at St. Michaels has overcome many challenges during this process. As seen in the scores below, there have been some fluctuations over time. For example, in the physical environment, we see drops in scores from the first Plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle to the second. Observations showed us that these drops may have occurred due to situations beyond the team's control. For example, we witnessed factors like summer heat and construction on the outside of the building, which made the unit darker and warmer than normal. This not only decreased physical environment scores, it also affected social environment scores, as the heat and lack of light affected the energy levels of both staff and residents. Despite these and other challenges, we have seen improvements in overall mealtime activities, and staff have consistently maintained (and even improved upon) initial increases in observational measurement scores.



End of Study Celebration

The Stakeholder Engagement for Practice Change will conclude with an 'End of Study Celebration' on September 29, 2017. This celebration will enable the research team to give thanks to the team and to celebrate the hard work, success, and dedication we have witnessed from staff, family and residents throughout this project. In attendance (and there to support and celebrate this success) will be representatives from the Alzheimer's Society of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, The Alzheimer's Society of Canada, Alberta Health Services, and Covenant Health. These organizations have been integral to supporting the research team throughout the project, and they are excited to have the opportunity to celebrate with residents, staff and family of St. Michael's Health Care Centre.