

Dimensions organisational case study: implementing STOMP (STopping Over-Medication of People with a learning disability, autism or both)

Context

Dimensions delivers care and support services to people with learning disabilities and/or autism., including people who have additional behaviour support or mental health needs. The organisation has a Quality and Practice Committee which provides governance of the delivery of these services. During a committee meeting, a board member asked a question about the use of anti-psychotic medication in Dimensions services. In response, a mini-survey was undertaken to establish the prevalence of the use of psychotropic medication. Based on the survey results, the Quality and Practice Committee concluded that a plan was needed to tackle over-medication of people with learning disabilities across the organisation.

Aim

Dimensions has taken a position that anyone who is taking psychotropic medication for any reason is at risk of over-medication. As a care and support provider, they are responsible for working with NHS colleagues to ensure that everyone is taking the right medication, in the right amount and at the right time for them. Therefore, Dimensions aims to ensure that psychotropic medication is only ever prescribed and administered to the people they support in accordance with NICE guidance.

Action

An individual was appointed into the role of Health Programme Manager and was tasked with leading on tackling over-medication. There was an early recognition that over-medication could not be resolved through operations teams alone, but also needed to involve learning and development, quality management and behaviour support. Therefore, the Health Programme Manager began by developing an outcomes-focussed action plan that reached into all relevant parts of the organisation.

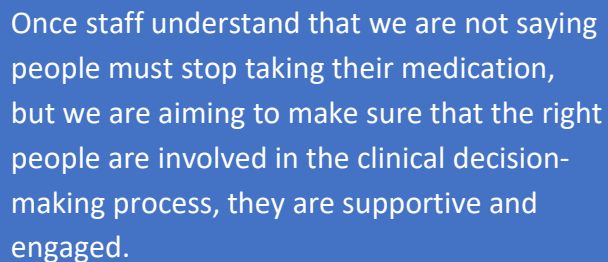
Around the same time as Dimensions was developing its plan, VODG (Voluntary Organisations Disability Group) and NHS England were developing a STOMP pledge for social care. Having already begun work in this area Dimensions was well-placed to contribute to development of the pledge and became one of its early-adopters.

Dimensions decided to introduce STOMP by piloting it in one region, prior to national implementation. Managers began by collecting data on the people they support who were taking psychotropic medication. An audit tool based on the Dimensions pilot can be found at <https://www.vodg.org.uk/campaigns/stompcampaign/>

Dimensions is a large organisation with a national footprint. Consequently, there was significant debate about the best process for translating an organisational commitment to STOMP into actions that would make a really difference in people's lives. Firstly, an organisation-wide survey was undertaken to identify all the people supported by Dimensions who are taking psychotropic medication. Secondly, a decision was made that the most effective approach would be to ensure that each person who is taking psychotropic medication has an individual STOMP plan. The Dimensions planning template turns the STOMP pledge commitments into 'I' statements which can be used to evaluate the person's support, identify what else needs to be put in place to meet NICE guidance and who is responsible and accountable for delivering this.

Engagement

People at all levels of the organisation have engaged positively with this piece of work. There was a massive response to the survey and this created a 'buzz' in staff teams. Nationally, Dimensions has used all its existing means of internal communications to promote the STOMP campaign. Examples include developing health and wellbeing pages on the company intranet, blogs on overcoming challenges and posters across the organisation. Each region has been encouraged to develop their own approach to introducing STOMP; for instance, some regions have a steering group; some have a STOMP lead; some teams have held a STOMP day, while others have used existing meeting structures. Dimensions has also developed a mandatory STOMP on-line training module. All staff will be taking this in 2018.



Once staff understand that we are not saying people must stop taking their medication, but we are aiming to make sure that the right people are involved in the clinical decision-making process, they are supportive and engaged.

Dave Robinson, Dimensions

Dimensions has experienced some caution from family members and it has been important to take time to talk through their new approach. However, family members have been receptive once they understand that STOMP is about ensuring that people are only taking the medication that they really need and there has been no outright resistance to this approach.

Outcomes

The development and delivery of Dimensions STOMP action plan is being overseen by the Quality and Practice Committee. Monitoring is against a single key performance indicator (KPI) which is the percentage of people taking psychotropic medication who have a multi-disciplinary review every six months. The target is 100%. This is now monitored quarterly. Data shows that in the first quarter that monitoring has taken place, the percentage of people who have had a multidisciplinary review has increased by 13%

Although difficult to quantify, there is a sense that Dimensions staff are becoming more confident about appropriately challenging decisions concerning psychotropic medication. Dimensions approach to STOMP is beginning to feature in CQC reports. Dimensions East Anglia Domiciliary Care has been rated 'Outstanding'; this included the 'Well-Led' domain, based in part on its implementation of STOMP:

'This included the review of all psychotropic medicines used within the service. It also included checking when people last had a medicines review, and if there are plans documented in the care records to reduce the need for these medicines where possible. The service demonstrated to us that this had resulted in reviews and reductions in the use of psychotropic medicines. This was because they used effective positive behaviour support techniques.'¹

Top Tips

- Identify a STOMP lead.
- Identify people, including people with a learning disability, who are passionate about STOMP and will influence and motivate others.
- Make sure you identify the organisational capacity to address over-medication fully.

¹ Care Quality Commission (2017) Dimensions East Anglia Domiciliary Care office Inspection report. Accessed: http://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/new_reports/INS2-2473860832.pdf

- Make sure that managers understand what is expected of them; build accountability and monitoring into your systems.
- The most useful practical tool is the individual checklist and action plan.
- The combination of accurate data, such as the number of multi-disciplinary reviews, and great success stories is very powerful in motivating staff teams.
- Publicise STOMP internally; make good use of all your communication systems and opportunities.
- Recognise staff who have supported people to have a better quality of life through tackling over-medication.
- Make the most of opportunities to get involved in research.

Contact

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