Gentle Persuasive Approaches in Dementia Care

Specialized Geriatric Services has embraced the Gentle Persuasive Approach (GPA) concept and has invested in the training of several outreach team staff who are prepared to offer this innovative education curriculum to Long Term Care Homes and Geriatric Day Programs in the London-Middlesex area. Many Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants on SWOGAN county teams are also trained in GPA and are offering this program to Long Term Care Homes in their areas.

The curriculum is designed for delivery to interdisciplinary groups from all departments including health care aides, dietary aides, and housekeeping staff. Involvement in this curriculum will provide staff with invaluable education and the opportunity to develop skills to manage challenging behaviour associated with dementia.

The overall goal of the GPA curriculum is to educate staff on how to use a person-centered, compassionate and gentle persuasive approach, and respond respectfully and with confidence and skill to challenging behaviours.

More specifically, as a result of participating in this curriculum, staff will:

- 1. Understand that the client with dementia is a unique human being who has an emotional response to stimuli;
- 2. From a holistic perspective explain the relationship between the disease process and the individual's behavioural response;
- 3. Describe emotional, environmental, and interpersonal aspects of communicating with persons with dementia;
- 4. Choose strategies that serve to diffuse challenging behaviours rather than escalating them;
- 5. Demonstrate the suitable and respectful protection techniques to use in response to catastrophic behaviour.

For further information or to arrange for training, contact the Southwestern Ontario Regional Geriatric Outreach Team at Parkwood Hospital, 685-4292 ext 42335.