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Health and Care Research

“How can I help residents with their mouth care?”

A participatory research project to develop oral
healthcare innovations in long-term care

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NICHE

Nurturing Innovation in Care
Home Excellence in Leeds



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A novel and innovative approach



Spilsbury et al., 2018;
Verbeek et al., 2020



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Leeds Care Association

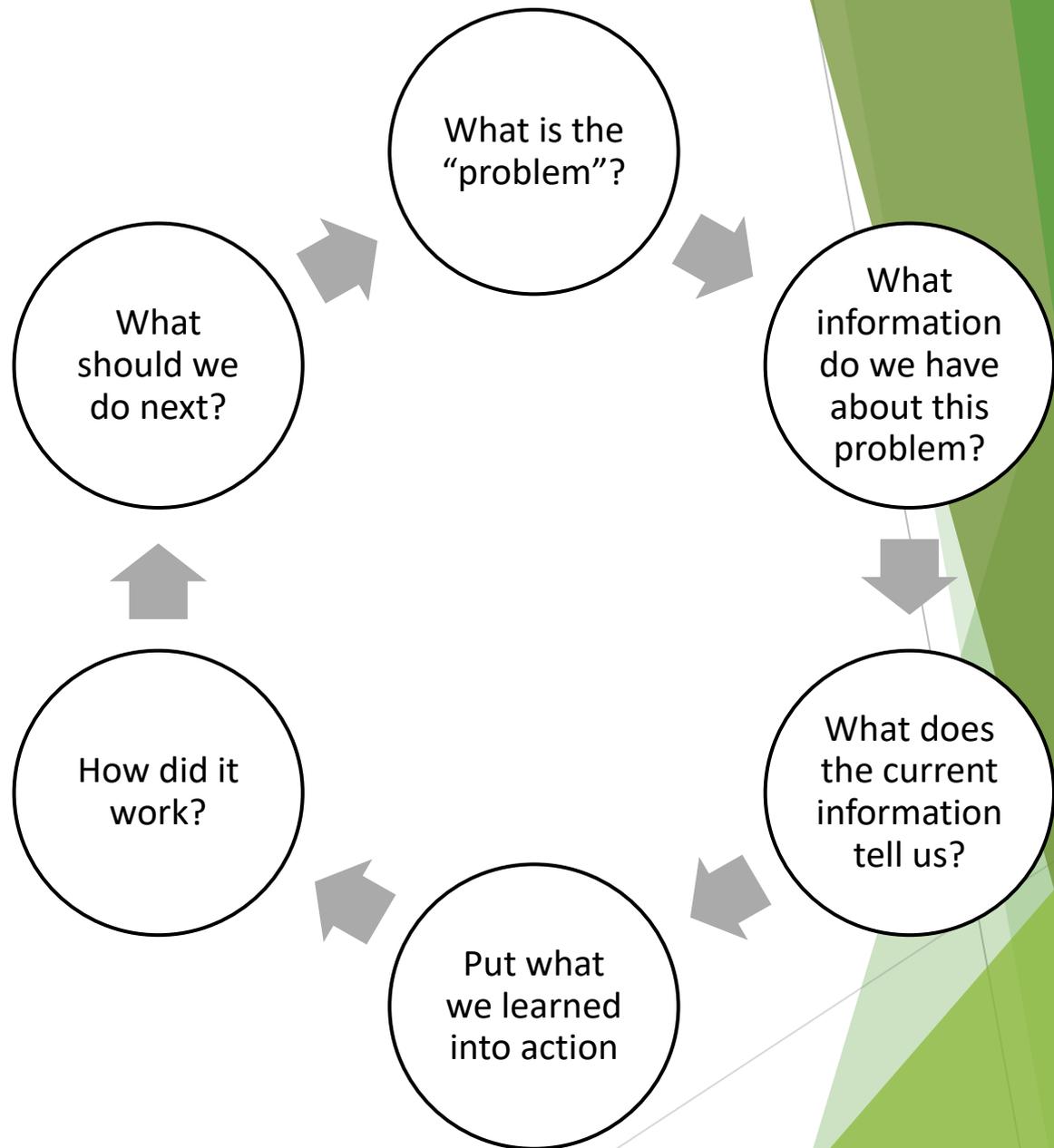
Westward Care

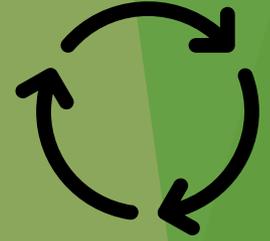


SPRINGFIELD
HEALTHCARE



“How can I help residents with their mouth care, particularly when they resist this care?”





1. What is the problem and how does it translate into a research question?

- ▶ Prioritizing and refining based on meetings with all the partners, until agreement is reached
- ▶ **Research question: what strategies are effective for promoting oral health among residents who resist mouth care?**



- ▶ Relevant systematic review identified and selected (Hoben et al., 2017)

...developed Know-How summary sheet with the staff

NICHE KNOW-HOW

Care home staff can use a range of strategies to enable and motivate residents to perform their own mouth care **and** prevent or overcome mouth care responsive behaviours in residents

Small changes to the environment (for example, sitting in front of a mirror, placing toothbrush and toothpaste in reach) are important: they promote and enable mouth care.

Step-by-step cues and commands help residents engage with self-care and be more independent:

- Encouraging comments and demonstrating an action improves mouth care for residents with moderate dementia.
- Guiding a resident through each step (for example letting them know when to use water or to use a towel) improves mouth care for residents with severe dementia.

Giving full assistance to residents *reduces* opportunities for successfully providing mouth care for residents with severe dementia.

Any future studies need to focus on practical strategies for supporting care staff with this important aspect of care.

We have produced a list of strategies to help care home staff.

Practical strategies for care staff when promoting mouth care for residents¹

General

- Know the person
- Approach from the front
- Smile
- Ask permission before starting
- Focus on the person rather than the task
- Explain each step
- Be patient, repeat yourself as appropriate
- Give positive feedback and encouragement
- Establish a routine



Person refuses mouth care

- Figure out why (e.g., bad time, pain, fear) and change approach accordingly
- Develop a routine (e.g., every day at the same time where possible with the same caregiver)
- Provide a reason (e.g., let me get the food out of your teeth so you'll be more comfortable)
- Phase in mouth care (e.g., do front of teeth one day, back the next, and interdental brush once the person is comfortable)

Person won't open their mouth

- Tell-show-do techniques to promote understanding
- Touch the mouth, cheek, or jaw with the toothbrush to prompt to open
- Gently insert toothbrush to cleanse front surfaces of teeth
- Sing with the person
- Be patient, try small talk, provide a reason for mouth care
- Come back at another time when the person might be more responsive

Person resists care by grabbing

- Hand the person the toothbrush and invite to brush
- Reassure and rub shoulder/arm to help relax
- Distract or redirect by pausing, singing, talking
- Hand the person an object to hold and keep hands busy

Person bites toothbrush

- Gently wiggle the toothbrush and ask to open mouth
- Insert a smaller brush to work around the toothbrush
- Gently rub cheek to relax jaw muscle
- Slide finger along the inside of the cheek and massage jaw



...evaluation and next steps

NICHE KNOW-HOW

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NICHE LEEDS

*Adapted from Nelson et al., 2017b, Table 3, page 9-10

Practical strategies for care staff when promoting mouth care for residents*

General

- Rinse the person
- Approach from the front
- Smile
- Ask permission before starting
- Focus on the person rather than the task
- Explain each step
- Be patient, repeat yourself as appropriate
- Give positive feedback and encouragement
- Establish a routine

Person refuses mouth care

- Figure out why (e.g., bad time, pain, fear) and change approach accordingly
- Develop a routine (e.g., every day at the same time unless possible with the care recipient)
- Provide a reason (e.g., let them get the food out of your teeth so you'll be more comfortable)
- Phase in mouth care (e.g., do front of teeth one day, back the next, and occasional brush once the person is comfortable)

Person resists care by grabbing

- Hand the person the toothbrush and invite to brush
- Reassure and rub shoulder/arm to help relax
- Distract or redirect by praising, singing, talking
- Hand the person an object to hold and keep hands busy

Person bites toothbrush

- Gently wiggle the toothbrush and ask to open mouth
- Insert a smaller brush to work around the toothbrush
- Gently rub cheek to relax jaw muscle
- Slide finger along the inside of the cheek and massage jaw

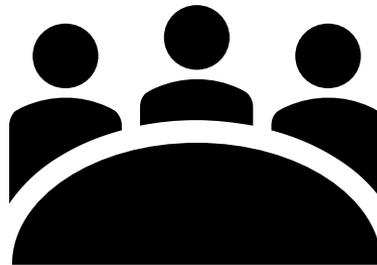
Person won't open their mouth

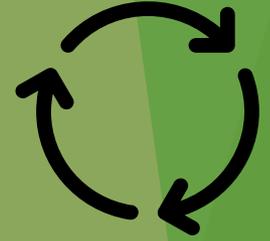
- Tell about do techniques to promote understanding
- Touch the mouth, cheek, or jaw with the toothbrush to prompt to open
- Gently insert toothbrush to cleanest front surface of teeth
- Sing with the person
- Be patient, try small task, provide a reason for mouth care
- Come back at another time when the person might be more responsive



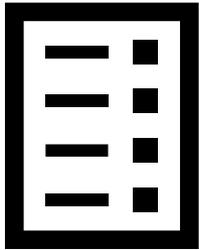
Used in daily practice, in induction of all new staff, pride and satisfaction...

...A member of staff raised uncertainties about the level of knowledge and understanding of mouth care among colleagues...





2. What are the knowledge, beliefs and behaviours about mouth care among the staff?



- ▶ Collaboration with School of Dentistry
- ▶ Survey on the knowledge, confidence, skills, beliefs, responsibilities and training needs

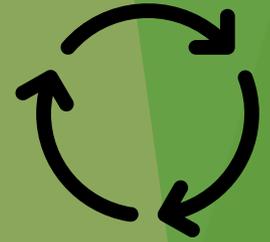
Jablonski et al., 2009; NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, 2005; Pyle et al., 1999; Young et al., 2008

- ▶ 52 care home staff in a direct caring role
- ▶ Mixed knowledge, beliefs and attitudes
- ▶ Lack of detail about how to support residents

...need for more awareness of best practice

3. Actions for improvement

- ▶ Positive, simple knowledge resources mapping into the survey



SUPPORTING RESIDENTS WITH MOUTH CARE

Did you know....?

Some medicines reduce saliva, leaving people with a dry mouth

All residents should have a mouthcare assessment and care plan when they move in

Some conditions (like Parkinson's or dementia) can make it harder for people to clean their teeth

As people age, they **do not** naturally lose their teeth

Mouth health is related to general body health and quality of life

Oral discomfort is associated with poor nutritional status

Residents still need regular assessment by a dentist



Are you promoting mouth care ?



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A network of teaching and learning care homes

What can you do...

Check for physical, verbal and behavioural signs of oral pain

Use different solutions for dentures made of plastic or with metal parts

Dentures should be removed, cleaned and soaked nightly, and rinsed after meals

Brush teeth twice a day with a high fluoride toothpaste to help reduce gum disease

Look after lips: clean with water moistened gauze, apply balm

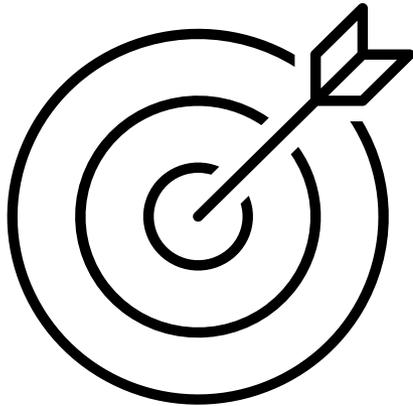
Consider a softer toothbrush

Continue using powered toothbrushes if the resident uses one

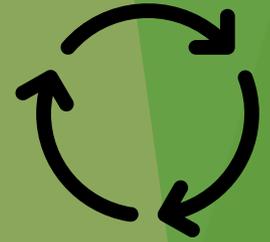
Inspect gums in good light and report any changes

4. Developing the project

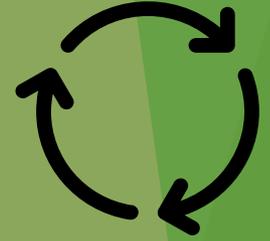
Caring Optimally: promoting effective Mouth MinuTes in care homes (COMMIT Study)



To develop theory- and research - informed guidance for care homes to promote staff behaviours to improve oral health (committing to effective ‘mouth minutes’) for care home residents.



4. Developing the project



The COMMIT study

Summarizing what has worked in improving oral healthcare for residents (*overview of reviews*)

Summarizing what helps or gets in the way of the staff promoting oral healthcare of residents (*scoping review of barriers and enablers*)

Sharing and 'sense-checking' with residents, relatives, staff, external health professionals and policy makers (*focus groups*)

Developing with resident, relatives and staff, the guiding principles of intervention (*logic model*)

Sharing and refining strategies and intervention principles with residents, relatives, staff, external health professionals and policy makers (*stakeholder workshops*)





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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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WILEY

Maintaining and improving mouth care for care home residents: A participatory research project

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Disclaimer

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Working **together.**



Questions and comments?

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