# Implementing a Sensory Enhancement Project Across a Health System

Jennifer Bierbaum, DNP, APRN-CNS, AGCNS-BC, CENP, GERO-BC;
Nadine Henry-Thomas, DNP, MSN-Ed, CMSRN, PCCN

NICHE + Nebraska Methodist Hospital Regional Geriatric Nursing Conference

1

# Questions

- How many times in your practice do you wish for a device to assist in the communication with your older adult patient/s?
- How many times did you assess your patient to be dependent? Bedfast?
   Required moderate to maximum assist?
- How many times did you need to investigate the loss of glasses, hearing aids or dentures?
- How many times did you refer a patient for physical/occupational therapy consult then realized that the patient can mobilize with an assistive device?

# **Learning Objectives**

- 1. Recognize the importance of sensory impairment in the older adult's quality of life.
- 2. Evaluate sensory enhancement project outcomes.
- 3. Assess feasibility of a sensory enhancement project.

3

## **Focus**

- What is Sensory Impairment?
- Sensory impairment in the older adult has a direct impact on quality of life.
- Sensory impairments can also lead to an increased risk of developing dementia.

4



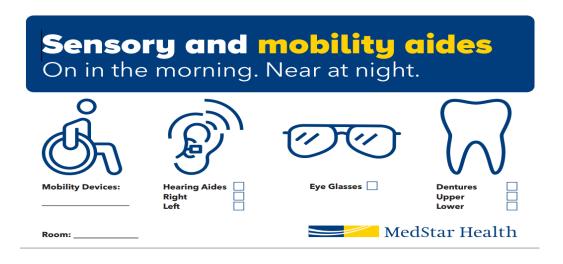






5

# Method



Care

#### MedStar NICHE Champion Audit Tool

Unit:	Date:	Reviewer name(s):	
A 10 0	1 1 1 1 1 1		10 1 10 1 11 1 MACH

	Patient is ≥ 65 years old	Sensory & Mobility Aid Sign is available in the room	Sensory & Mobility Aid Sign is completed accurately	Patient has appropriate container(s) to protect & place sensory aids
Patient Optio Label	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Patient Optio Label	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

• All 10 MSH acute care entities piloted on at least one identified NICHE unit from April 1 through April 30, 2024.

#### **Method**

- Entities reported outcomes from the pilot in June 2024.
- Audits were conducted by identified GRNs for utilization of signage.

7

### Results

- Increased documentation related to the utilization of sensory devices such as hearing aids, eyeglasses, and dentures was noted.
- These devices we also noted to be more frequently accounted for upon discharge (cost savings).

#### **Unanticipated Positive Outcomes**

- Hospitals also experienced an increase in nurse communication with discharge surveys.
- Improved nurse and patient communication on patient and nurse satisfaction survey.

# **Discussion/Nursing Implications**

- Improving awareness and understanding of sensory devices is crucial to providing quality care and maintaining dignity during an acute care hospitalization.
- Decreases in delirium and increases in quality of life are key performance indicators (KPIs).
- A sensory improvement project can augment the processes for KPI achievement.

9

### References

- Tseng, YC., Liu, S.HY., Lou, MF. et al. Quality of life in older adults with sensory impairments: a systematic review. Qual Life Res 27, 1957–1971 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-018-1799-2.
- Völter C, Thomas JP, Maetzler W, Guthoff R, Grunwald M, Hummel T. Sensory Dysfunction in Old Age. Dtsch Arztebl Int. 2021 Jul 26;118(29-30):512-520. doi: 10.3238/arztebl.m2021.0212. PMID: 34158149; PMCID: PMC8476826.
- Correia C, Lopez KJ, Wroblewski KE, Huisingh-Scheetz M, Kern DW, Chen RC, Schumm LP, Dale W, McClintock MK, Pinto JM. Global Sensory Impairment in Older Adults in the United States. J Am Geriatr Soc. 2016 Feb;64(2):306-313. doi: 10.1111/jgs.13955. PMID: 26889840; PMCID: PMC4808743.

# Questions

Nadine Henry-Thomas, DNP, MSN-Ed, CMSRN, PCCN

- Director of Nursing
- Tower 4. Cardiac/Tele.
- MFSMC
- Email: Nadine.Henry-Thomas@medstar.net
- Office: 443-777-7006

Jennifer F. Bierbaum, DNP, APRN-CNS, AGCNS-BC, CENP, GERO-BC

- Director of Nursing Practice and Innovation
- Center of Nursing Excellence
- MSMHC
- Email: jennifer.bierbaum@medstar.net
- Office: 301-877-5854

11