

What a Difference a Day Makes (WDDM) – Description

Room 217's WDDM is a donor-driven program which requires funding to bring the Pathways Singing Program to Adult Day Programs across Canada. WDDM provides an opportunity to remove funding as a barrier and extends the delivery and accessibility of Room 217's benefit-designed memory care singing program. WDDM is designed to be a controlled delivery and support process as opposed to a giveaway program. Participating sites agree to be part of a process which tracks the use and outcomes of Pathways over a period of three months. At the end of that time, participating organizations will keep Pathways and integrate it into their regular programming.

Background

Adult Day Programs are a community support initiative that assists people living with dementia, by empowering people to live at home and participate in their community for as long as possible. Though still a fairly new concept in Canada, thousands of people aged 18 and older with physical or cognitive impairment attend Adult Day Programs in their communities, where they have a place to be cared for and interact with others during the day. The majority of participants are older adults. Adult Day Programs help to reduce boredom, support mental health and provide emotional support for persons with dementia.

The Need

The cost for attending an Adult Day Program varies by location. Most Adult Day Programs receive funding from provincial Ministries of Health, and possibly from municipal governments, and not-for-profits like the Alzheimer's Society, but the funding does not always fully cover costs. Many programs operate on a user-pay basis, where clients pay for the half- or full-day that they attend the program, and often, fundraising has to take place to supplement the remaining costs of the program.

Music – the Language We All Understand

Music is considered by many experts as a natural choice in helping people living with dementia. Singing, as a means of music-making, is particularly beneficial in dementia care because it is a healthy and meaningful activity. Singing provides a point of human contact, and is a meaningful activity that may provide emotional connection and intimacy, connecting people living with dementia to prior experiences where they were held, rocked, patted and sung to when they were in need of comfort.

Pathways – A Singing Solution for Adult Day Programs

Pathways is a singing program whose purpose is to enhance the quality of life for people living with dementia and their caregivers. It can be used in large groups, small groups and with individuals.

Impact of Pathways

For three months in 2015, Pathways was beta tested in 30 sites (including seven Adult Day Programs) and a report was compiled. Among the observations reported were an increase in socialization, and responsiveness to music, and a decrease in negative (also known as responsive) behaviours.

Timeline

WDDM will provide meaningful activity to participants in 750 Adult Day Programs in Canada beginning September 2017.