



Integrating Gaming Activities to Therapeutic Recreation in Patients Admitted to Inpatient Rehabilitation Care

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Received: March 25, 2022

Published: April 22, 2022

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Inpatient Rehabilitation care is the specialized care delivered by Multi-disciplinary Rehabilitation Team in an institutional setting. Individuals recovering from major medical or surgical illness have to go through comprehensive rehabilitation care for them to come back to the normal daily life. After critical illness, most diseases from Neurology, Orthopedics, Cardiology and Oncology require Inpatient Rehabilitation Care. Specially neurorehabilitation patients will have varied and complex needs that mandate long duration of stay at inpatient rehabilitation facility.

Key components of comprehensive rehabilitation care include baseline assessment by multi-disciplinary rehabilitation team, care plan based on baseline assessment and regular review of the care plan progress with reference to pre-set goals. When implementing the care plan, environment of the care plan setting and engagement of the patient during the implementation of the care plan will determine long term adherence of the prescribed care plan and outcomes achieved.

After admission to inpatient rehabilitation care, baseline assessment is completed by multi-disciplinary team comprising of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, respiratory therapists, speech therapists, dieticians and psychologists. In addition to the clinical assessments, emphasis is also made to understand the personal, behavioral, social and occupational history of the patients. Family members play an important role in sharing the relevant information, as they would know it the best.

To successfully complete care plan, patients have to stay motivated to adhere to the advised care plan that might range from few

weeks to several months. This is even more critical in neurological disorders like stroke, spinal cord injuries and traumatic brain injuries.

Therapeutic recreation is designed to make therapy as recreative activity, engaging and ensuring the completion of the care plan. Gaming activities are one such activities introduced as part of therapeutic recreation to help patients engaged and stay motivated to continue the advised long duration care plan.

Gaming activities can range from simple board games to equipment featuring gaming system that can keep a track of personalized goals, performance and feedback on improvement areas. Gaming activities that drive physical activities are helpful in strength training, hand coordination, balance and gait training. Multiple of games help in improving cognitive abilities of the patients. When involved as a group, these gaming activities also help in improving social behavior and community integration.

In an institutional set up where state of the art facilities and expert multi-disciplinary rehabilitation teams are available, these gaming activities naturally integrate to therapeutic recreational activities. Gaming activities are driven by either therapists who deliver the care, or in some cases coordinators or volunteers who are designated implementation of recreational activities.

When computerized gaming activities are implemented, there are wide range of options that can be chosen to personalize the rehabilitation care implementation. A baseline score, real time feedback and every day tracker will make the progress objective. Irrespective of scores being improved incrementally or exponentially,

the direction of progress is made prominent and this will make patients help gain motivation.

Gaming activities are planned as one on one sessions, in groups or involving family members actively. Grouping can be done by disease condition, level of therapy or kind of rehabilitative activity intended for recovery. There will be lot of coordination required in group activities as there is concrete planner required to ensure care schedules implemented in such a way that primary care delivery does not overlap with group activities.

Feedback on the outcomes of gaming activities is collected at multiple times. One common time is immediately after the session is completed. The gain in the confidence of the patient and immediate affirmation for next session will pave a long way for recovery path. Another common feedback time is during family counselling where all care plan activities are reviewed with designated primary care giver or family member and resetting of the goals takes place as per progress. Various parameters like duration of sessions, duration of therapy, cooperation during sessions and mood or behavior stability are used to assess the improved engagement.

An additional benefit that is commonly noticed is with caregivers or the family members. When patients are more engaged in therapy, family members get respite from the intense rehabilitation care companionship. This indirectly adds more energy and time to the care givers and family members.

From the therapist's point of view when patients and family members are at ease to cooperate for long term rehabilitation care, implementing the therapy to achieve the desired goals becomes relatively easy and effective.

Review of multiple care plans at inpatient rehabilitation care have reflected the importance of gaming activities being integrated to therapeutic recreation for the patients to stay motivated and complete the advised care plan. Patients, patient's family and therapists involved in the care plan have acknowledged the improved motivation and enhanced adherence to the advised care plan. This improved motivation was prominent in patients requiring long term care.

In summary, most patients recovering from major medical or surgical illness require long term rehabilitation care. Adherence to prescribed care plan is always a challenge factor that will determine the outcomes of rehabilitation care. When gaming activities are integrated as a part of therapeutic recreation, there is an improved motivation seen in patients to stay long and complete advised care plan to achieve desired outcomes. Family members get respite from the ongoing care. Having the benefit of having motivated patients and at ease family members, therapists will have better chance of implementing long term therapy to achieve desired goals.