Improving communication in Mental Health Services

BACKGROUND

Delayed discharges are one of the leading causes of inefficiency in the SABP. A single bed in an inpatient unit costs £500 per night.

With the current drive to increase cost effectiveness, reducing delayed discharges is a top priority for SABP.

CONCEPT

Experience of frontline staff highlighted poor communication between inpatient clinical team and community team (CMHRS) as a factor in delayed discharges. Patient’s needs are often not flagged up to CMHRS early, and ward teams are often unaware of information that is needed by CMHRS to facilitate discharge.

At current, communication between the two teams relies almost exclusively on care coordinators attending ward rounds in person. In practice care coordinators heavy workloads make this impractical and inefficient. A simple tool to improve this could help to reduce delayed discharges.

OUR IDEA

To create a simple proforma to ensure a weekly written handover between ward and community teams

THE PILOT

A 3-month pilot was undertaken at the Mid Surrey assessment and treatment unit. The pilot involved Elgar ward as well as the two CMHRSs which it covers: Epsom and Clarendon House. A shared drive was set up, which gave access to both ward and community staff. The weekly feedback from the community team could be included in the ward round entry when the care coordinator was not available to give verbal feedback.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

We began by adapting an existing proforma used for informal handover within the ward team. We felt that this would best ensure familiarity with the tool. We changed the structure to include a number of headings. These were developed in consultation with members of the community and ward teams. The managers of two CMHRSs were involved and agreed to host a pilot with one ward. Further discussions took place with the entire community team. Following feedback from team members the format was changed from an email based format to a single document for each CMHRS, held in a shared folder. Advice was sought from IG, and approval was obtained.

http://mysuccessfullife.co.uk/tag/communication/