

Staff Perspectives on the Work and Impact of Namaste Care for Care Home Residents with Advanced Dementia:

Creating a Sacred Space for Shared Positive Experiences

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Background

Namaste Care is an emerging multi-sensorial model of palliative care to improve the quality of life for people with advanced and end-stage dementia.

Method

Appreciative Inquiry guided the Namaste Care Pilot Project which was a joint piece of work between ACCORD Hospice and a local residential care home.

Inductive Template Analysis was adopted to analyse over one hundred diary entries written by eight Namaste Care Practitioners over a six month period.

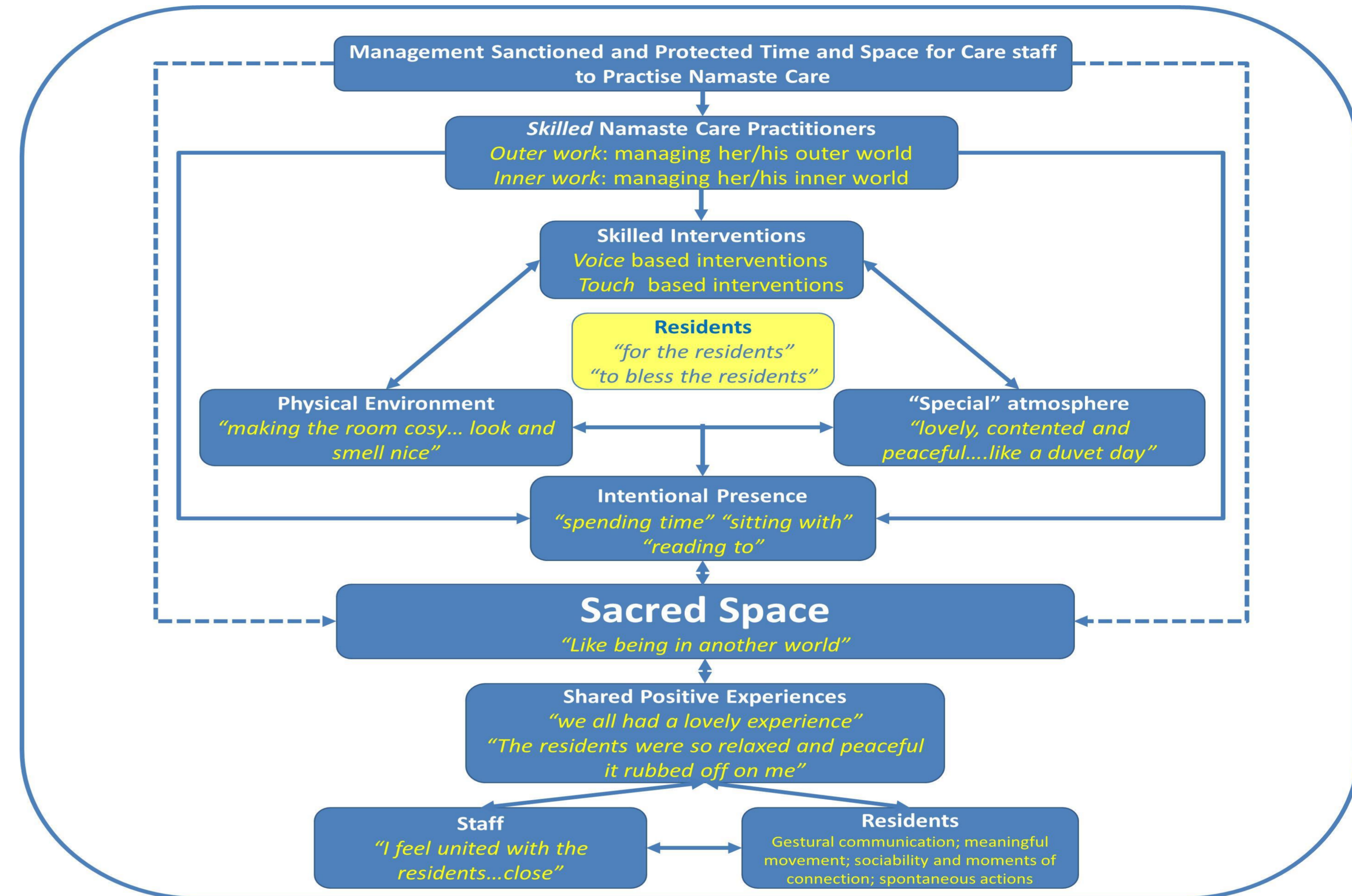
Results

Staff's response to the work and practise of Namaste Care was predominantly positive and related to their perceptions about:

- managing to create/access a "special" atmosphere and environment to practise Namaste Care which was reframed and described as creating/accessing "sacred space"
- residents having a positive reaction to Namaste Care
- Namaste Care improving residents' quality of life
- staff and residents having **shared positive experiences** during Namaste Care sessions.

Residents' response to Namaste Care was predominantly positive. Residents seemed to experience moments of connection and engagement with the process of Namaste Care. This was demonstrated through:

- episodes of gestural communication
- movement with intentionality
- moments of connection and sociability
- Spontaneous - often apparently joyful - actions.



Conclusion

- Namaste Care - a specific *service* for a specific *group* in a specific *place* at a specific *time* - facilitated regular opportunities for episodes of warmth, tenderness and unique **shared positive experiences** between residents and staff.
- Residents often used their bodies to communicate and connect with staff. This behaviour was in stark contrast to the dominant discourse and perception that with cognitive decline comes an inevitable and complete loss of "self". Residents included in this project remained active participants in the process of Namaste Care, suggesting that *something*, rather than *nothing*, of their "self" remained present in the world.
- Although the elements of Namaste Care were simple, the practice could be complex. Therefore, a high level of commitment and flexibility was required from all levels of the care home team to implement, practise and develop the programme.