



Dementia care and the Brewtopia moment

WORKING IN BREWTOPIA.

One of my favourite ads is a recent TV ad by Yorkshire Tea. When a worker drops a piece of paper on the factory floor he is corrected by one of his colleagues saying “we don’t do things like that around here. WE do things PROPER”. This is what a healthy culture looks like.

ROLLING BALLS UP THE HILL AND MAKING YOGHURT.

The benefits of a healthy culture are enormous and establishing such a culture is like rolling a heavy ball up a steep hill - it can take many many years depending on your starting point. But once it is established it is largely self-perpetuating, as any home yoghurt maker will know. If you empty out half the yoghurt and refill it with milk it will make new yoghurt. Similarly in a care home, new staff will quickly absorb the healthy culture - or they will quickly leave. While policies and procedures, regulations, and training all have their role, I would argue that a healthy culture is the best predictor of consistently good care.

TOPPING UP THE BATTERY.

Dementia Care is emotional labour where we ask carers to give of



themselves day after day. Like a battery that is drained, eventually the battery is empty, it has nothing left to give. To some extent, a healthy culture within a care home can help reduce this drain and most carers find that caring is a two way process. But it is not enough and carers have lives outside the care home.

KEEPING OUR SIDE OF THE BARGAIN.

Good pay and conditions are essential - it simply is not realistic or fair to expect carers to respect and promote other people’s dignity day after day if they cannot themselves live with dignity. Good pay backs up our expressions of appreciation for the valuable contribution that carers make, it keeps our side of the bargain. We only have to look at the exodus of

Junior Doctors from the NHS to see what happens when we do not back up our expressions of devotion with pay and conditions that match their extraordinary commitment.

THE KILLER QUESTION.

Next time you visit a care home (or any health and care establishment), ask staff how they feel about their pay and conditions. Their face will tell you all you need to know. ♦

Peter de Groot is a principal at Dementia Care Devon which operates the Cottage and Lodge at Rose Lodge, two small communities for people living with Dementia.



Gold Award

Rose Lodge, 2 Isca Road, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2EZ

01395 227071 ♦ www.roselodgecarehome.co.uk

Blog & dementia info: www.dementiacaredevon.co.uk



Outstanding
2016