Developing guidance for using information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the lives of people with dementia

Ben Hicks
Context

- Commissioned by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
- Get Connected Grant (2010-2012)
  - Improve the quality of life for care service users either directly (making online technologies available to them for their own use) or indirectly (improved access to online information and training for staff)
- Feedback from staff surveys suggested care managers and staff struggled in using technology with people with dementia
Aims

• To develop a guide that would identify activities using ICT that are suitable for use by or with people with dementia from early diagnosis and right through their journey

• Guide needed to be present a broad range of uses for ICT and be easily comprehensible
Methods

• Five stages:
  1. Literature review
  2. Telephone interviews dementia experts and care home managers
  3. Review of the evidence by an Expert Advisory Group
  4. First draft of the document circulated to the AG and revised
  5. Field-testing in nine care organisations
Results

• Newall et al (2002) suggests that well designed ICT systems:
  • Allow people to retain high level of independence and control
  • Provide appropriate levels of monitoring without violating privacy
  • Keep people intellectually and physically active
  • Provide communication methods to reduce social isolation
• Dementia specific technology available but this can be expensive
Results - Technologies available

- Wide range of technologies being used for different purposes:
  - Improving communication
  - Facilitating reminiscence
  - Facilitating participation in society
  - Enabling engagement with hobbies or interests
  - Provide cognitively stimulating activities
  - Encouraging mild exercise
  - Providing entertainment
Results- How to use the technology

• All people with dementia can be involved in using technology if they want to- DO NOT assume they wont want to participate
• Caution when introducing the technology-begin simple and work up
• Do not set people up to fail
• Technology not a replacement for human interaction- still need the person-centred approach to care (Kitwood 1997)
• Consistency in the language used
• Staff confidence important
Results of the field testing

• Barriers to introducing ICT
  • Staff training: guidance provide sources of training
  • Resident apathy: guidance highlight the fact that all people can be engaged and down to the staff to do this
  • Costs: guidance highlighted long term benefits of ICT to managers and suggested other ways of obtaining equipment
Results of the field testing

- Guidance generally viewed as easy to read and not too ‘techie’
- Guidance clearly highlighted what technology was best to use for the activity being undertaken and the size of the group/one-to-one
- Short and split into sections- inspired them to try new ways of working
- Case studies easy to follow
- Some revisions were made:
  - Emails
  - Skype
  - Using volunteers
  - More emphasis on forward planning
  - Avenues for funding
Taking the guidance forward

• Guidance now available:

• View to making the guidance online and more interactive with links and discussion forums
Thanks for listening!

- Ben Hicks
- bhicks@bournemouth.ac.uk