

THE AGE BLOG



Until a cure for dementia is found, hope hinges on education

A recent Canadian Federation of Nursing Unions report reveals that nurses are going to work expecting to be hurt. 43% of PSWs in Ontario's unionized long-term care facilities experience violence on a daily basis. Another 25% experience violence every week!¹ In Ontario alone, 11% of long-term care residents are deemed aggressive, 60% of have various forms of dementia and up to 80% of those individuals will at some point exhibit anxiety, depression, paranoia or aggression.² Workplace violence is prevalent in every province and territory in Canada.

It is important to understand that persons with dementia are not wilfully committing violence; we refer to it as “responsive behaviours.” Often these persons are not able to communicate their needs in the ways that you and I can, so behaviours stem from unmet needs. As a society, we hope for a cure for dementia; however, until a cure is found, hope hinges on education. In Canada, 25,000 new cases of dementia are diagnosed each year. All of this reinforces the need for dementia education and training programs such as Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA®).

On education ...

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

— Aristotle

One has to wonder, is all the publicity around violence in our health and community care environments raising a red flag for healthcare students? Will some of them rethink their career choice? In the latest issue of our GPA Certified Coach newsletter, the Coach Approach, our theme

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was hope and possibility. We spoke about the earnest enthusiasm we see in the hundreds of students we have the privilege of teaching in GPA. Their hope is for a future where they can make a difference, in a role in which their knowledge, skills and confidence will enhance patient care.

The safety of our future health care workforce is a priority. Dementia education must be embedded into post-secondary health care curriculums. We believe that this is the only way to equip, empower and protect them. Universities and colleges are making progress, but support for full implementation is needed, simply because everyone who interacts with older adults is at risk.

The appropriate programs are out there. As educators and employers, it's up to us to make sure our students and our staff learn from them.

^{1,2} Reichert, C. Project Team: Doer, E, Oxana, G, Advisory Committee CFNU Occupational Health and Safety Network. A Discussion Paper. Enough is Enough. Putting A Stop To Violence In The Health Care Sector. June 2017. The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU).



A Message from Patti Boucher, AGE Executive Director

As a not-for-profit social enterprise, we are experiencing our own sense of hope and possibility as we end our fiscal year. We submitted a Policy Brief on Workplace Violence Prevention to Ron Kelusky, the new Chief Prevention Officer at the Ontario Ministry of Labour. GPA is perfectly positioned to meet the government's mandate for violence prevention education and training for front-line health care staff in Ontario's hospitals.

AGE is also trialling a 2-part GPA education initiative called Integrated GPA (iGPA) which combines independent eLearning (Part 1) with a classroom session (Part 2). Guided by a GPA Certified Coach, Part 2 gives participants the opportunity to practice the GPA principles, practices, strategies and self-

protection techniques they learned in Part 1. iGPA is ideal for organizations who want to train more people, more quickly, with swift transfer of crucial knowledge and skills to the point of care.

The future for persons living with dementia depends upon providing the appropriate education and training for those who care for them. We underlined this in an article in the current issue of Home & Long Term Care News, Supporting Persons with Responsive Behaviours: Seven Things You Need to Know.

AGE continues to develop and deliver innovative dementia education programs that protect the health care provider, the person living with dementia and an organization's own mandate for a person-centred approach to care.

**Are You Interested in Implementing
Integrated GPA in Your Organization?**
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AGE is a national non-funded not-for-profit social enterprise committed to enhancing the care of older adults through dementia education products and services, with profits reinvested to further advance our social mission.

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