

# AGE congratulates: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority



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AGE Recognition Program



Gentle  
Persuasive  
Approaches

## GPA Leadership Excellence in Person-Centred Care

GPA® was implemented in Vancouver General Hospital and Older Adult Tertiary Mental Health (OATMH) in 2013. Since then GPA practice at VCH has grown exponentially. GPA Master Coaches Jasjit Gill and Dr. Lillian Hung, along with GPA Certified Coach Jenifer Tabamo spearhead dementia education for staff across disciplines at VCH.



(Left to right) Jasjit Gill, Jenifer Tabamo and Lillian Hung

The AGE Recognition Program acknowledges outstanding commitment to the practice of GPA in care settings. The Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA®) in Dementia Care curriculum is a product of Advanced Gerontological Education (AGE) Inc.

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In acute care, Dr. Lillian Hung and Jenifer Tabamo (Clinical Nurse Specialists) have been partnering as leads in GPA since 2016. The program has been embraced by staff in a positive collaboration with the mental health team

who are learning from their GPA implementation experiences in practice. GPA is an established part of staff education at both the OATMH and acute medicine units. With support from leadership, it is accessible to all care staff across disciplines. Jenifer shared a GPA story:

One patient, Ayda (*name changed*) had been constantly asking to go home. She was acutely ill and had advanced dementia, but didn't understand why she needed to be in the hospital. When her VCH care team spoke to her daughter, they learned that Ayda had been trying to go home even when she was at home. During care planning huddles, members of the care team talk about things that are important to a patient — a major tenet of GPA philosophy. They learned that Ayda loved creating art. She told staff members that at night when she was young her mom would tell her to go to sleep but she would continue to draw. With the help of Ayda's daughter, the team organized art materials for her and what a difference it made. This meaningful activity engaged her and she now creates lots of colourful art works for display in her room — some even hang on walls in the unit. Ayda is finally in her 'happy place,' a place that feels like home.

Since 2016, Jas Gill (Practice Lead) has trained over 3,000 interdisciplinary staff in GPA and championed GPA's benefits up and down the province of B.C. She is truly an outstanding GPA Champion.

A dietary aide commented to her: "[Before GPA training] I did not realize that throwing his plate was Manfred's (*name changed*) way of expressing that he was unhappy or in pain."

GPA education (and its passionate educators like Jas, Lillian and Jen) give staff a deeper understanding of the impact of dementia and teach them how to be safe and successful in their interactions. Jas and Jen shared a few insights into the spread of GPA across VCH:

In 2017, almost 600 staff (OATMH and Medicine program) and 1,000 long-term care staff participated in GPA. In 2018, GPA Basics and GPA-Recharged sessions were held monthly. Leaders in VCH's long-term care section were approached about GPA education and its benefits for their staff. To begin, the team targeted specific care homes in order to ensure that each home received their full attention and focus during GPA education and practice implementation. They started with three homes, using a dual interdisciplinary lens of education and care. Leaders, administrators, nurses, care aides, dietary aides, social workers, occupational and physical therapists, staff in laundry and housekeeping, receptionists, cooks, etc., were all invited as part of an education blitz for everyone to learn more about person-centred care approaches such as GPA. After a few staff went through GPA, they were so excited that more staff wanted to join in. Since GPA is multidisciplinary, physician groups and mental health teams were included as partners in this training.

Not only is GPA designed to be multidisciplinary, it is meant to complement other evidence-based tools in dementia care. For example, an evaluation of outcomes from using GPA and P.I.E.C.E.S at VCH in 2016 showed positive results for care approaches, calmer environments, residents not being rushed by staff and fewer patient/resident expressions of distress and anxiety.

In 2018, Dr. Lillian Hung and Research Assistants Cathy Son and Rebecca Hung published an article in the 'Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing' on VCH staffs' experience with GPA in acute care. Learn more here: [The experience of hospital staff in applying the Gentle Persuasive Approaches to dementia care.](#)