

Soundbite Script – Providing Comfort to Dementia Patients

Wayne Laramie, Chief Nursing Officer, OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center

“Doll therapy is a distraction intervention. It's providing a doll that's lifelike, to a patient who is experiencing dementia, where they can be agitated, confused, restless, sleepless, and it comforts them, and reminds them of whether they've been a parent or a grandparent. Just that rocking, caring and thinking about somebody else really is therapeutic. That's doll therapy.”

Wayne Laramie, Chief Nursing Officer, OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center

“Doll therapy is something new for inpatient acute care. So you assess those who might be eligible for it, and you try it out. You literally introduce the doll to them, and they either take to it or they don't. One way or the other, it's okay. Men and women are successful and impacted just the same -- 85% of men and women who were introduced with a doll who have dementia. It's effective, and it's not gender specific.”

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“Many times they tried to get up out of bed and they don't want to do that when they're holding a baby because they will fall and harm the baby. So they literally will put on a call light to say they need to go to the bathroom. Or when they get up they don't stand and start walking, they wait for somebody to come or they are very careful with how they're walking because they don't want to drop a baby or fall. So far, I can tell you it's been very successful: of all the babies we've given out we've had zero falls in that population and traditionally that's one of our highest fall groups with the most injuries.”

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“Doll therapy, we know is beneficial. We know that we have tried it on many patients already in just a short period of time. What we see from patients and what we hear from family is both eye opening and rewarding. Families have said things to us like this is another option that wasn't available before. They are impressed as to how calm and how it makes a difference. Many of them were skeptical to begin with, but once they see the results, it almost brings them to tears.”