



# REPORT, ARRC Webinar February 7, 2024, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

ARRC Webinar February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom  
“It's my Home! Working Together to Ensure Long Term Care Truly is Home”  
Presented by the B.C. Association of Social Workers

ARRC's second webinar of 2024 was presented by a panel of four Social Workers from the B.C. Association of Social Workers. Speakers described a variety of dimensions that support, and detract from, quality of care and quality of life for residents. Their theme was “Imagining”, asking participants to reflect on what they would want if they went to live in long-term care and what life would look like for them, if care was person-centred. The evening was facilitated by ARRC Leadership Team member Dawn Hemingway, herself a Social Worker and member of the B.C. Association. It concluded with remarks from Alison Leaney, the Association's Seniors Community of Practice Chairperson. All presenters spoke with sincere commitment based on years of experience and expertise in long-term care. 31 people attended.

## **First Speaker: Elizabeth**

Reflecting from both professional and personal perspectives, Elizabeth noted that as a long-term care resident, she would want her choices respected and discussed the need for everyone to be aware of, and question, their own assumptions and attitudes about long-term care. She acknowledged that what is valued is what gets funded and that the medical model of care gets a higher level of funding than the social model.

Elizabeth described how different models of care matter greatly. She showed a beautiful photo of an Abbeyfield House Society building which offers a small-scale model of care and creates a home-like environment for 12 – 15 older adults. There are several in B.C. operating in a non-profit context.

## **Second Speaker: Miriam**

Miriam described the role of the Social Worker in long-term care as essential, however noted that some facilities do not have one on staff. She explained the important services that Social Workers provide to potential and new residents and their families. Sometimes the relationship begins before the person moves in with the Social Worker answering questions and supporting planning. When new residents arrive, they are welcomed and helped during the moving in process.

Miriam described the need for compassionate communication at this time because the day of moving in can be emotional and overwhelming for some. She is sensitive to the level of adjustment the resident and family are experiencing, offering encouragement and resources.



She ensures that people feel heard and know that they matter. She advocates where necessary, turning the need she hears into action. “The person is the expert of their own life” - their voice must be respected.

### **Third Speaker: Tracy**

Tracy took a deeper dive into the elements of person-centred care. She explained that staff need to know the life stories of all the residents and noted that in a person-centred care environment, residents would see their culture around them. That people caring for them would have enough time to sit and talk.

Tracy stressed the importance of the interdisciplinary team in supporting quality of life. Key members include occupational, physical, music and recreation therapists, nursing staff, dietitians and social workers. She asked participants to imagine the impact if every home had an educator to share best practices with staff.

Tracy noted that person-centred care does exist in some care homes. Where it does, it creates a “home” environment and builds trust. Staff need to ask people “how can we make this feel more like home?” “What is important to you?” “What has helped you in the past?” This kind of information is shared with all the team and the answers people give should be reviewed over time as things can change. Tracy advised participants to be aware of assumptions because “everyone is unique”.

“Language sets the tone”. Tracy advised that certain words and phrases need to change e.g.: “home” instead of facility. “Moving in” as opposed to admission. “Neighbourhood” rather than wing or floor. Tracy concluded by noting that person-centred care results not only in better quality of care and quality of life but also that it makes staff feel better about the care they give, and makes families happier.

### **Fourth Speaker: Karen**

Karen provided an interesting and entertaining review of the role of technology in long-term care and its potential to enhance the wellbeing of residents, including those with dementia. She addressed several concerns that are commonly heard, relating to privacy, and the impact of technology in people’s lives.

The highlight of Karen’s presentation was a series of short videos demonstrating how residents respond to adorable robot companions and videos of animals. She reflected on the question of how Social Workers can collaborate with other disciplines in this age of technology.

### **Question and Answer Period**

Dawn thanked the presenters and opened the floor to discussion. A number of thoughtful questions were asked and answered. One related to how the Social Worker manages



complaints from residents and families and another inquired about what progress has been made on ARRC's proposal that the government appoint an Advisory Forum to plan and guide reform of the B.C. long-term care system.

ARRC thanks Dawn for skilled facilitation, Janet for her expertise in managing technology and everyone who attended this positive and encouraging evening.

We hope to see you next month for a webinar entitled "**Communication and Swallowing Health in Long-term Care**", presented by Speech and Hearing B.C. The presenter will be Speech-Language Pathologist Dr. Richard Welland. Please join us on **March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.** via Zoom.

For further description and list of future webinars: <https://www.rrcbc.ca/issues.html>