

## Nursing The Mentally Incapacitated -The Nurse's Perspectives



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- Nurses need to examine their own attitudes and ensure that they are “listening” to their patients
- Need special skills to focus on non verbal cues and observed behaviours for effective communications
- Be advocates for this vulnerable group

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- **ASSOCIATED PHYSICAL HANDICAPS**
  - CEREBRAL PALSY
  - MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY
  - VISUALLY HANDICAPPED
  - MUTE; DEAF/DUMB
  - COMPROMISE TO HEART & LUNGS

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### **PHYSICAL**

- **MAIN DIFFICULTIES**
  - COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS eg sign language; touch
  - LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING FROM BOTH SIDES & ELICITING APPROPRIATE RESPONSES
  - COPING WITH THEIR LIMITED PHYSICAL MOBILITY IN ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADL) FROM BOTH PATIENTS AND STAFF

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### • **PSYCHOLOGICAL**

#### **STAFF-PATIENT BONDING AND ITS OBLIGATIONS**

Patients come to rely on their caregivers and their absence often affect the patients' behaviour in ADL

#### **STRAIN ON THE STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Worries and concerns about their patients during family time affecting quality of life

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### • **EMOTIONAL**

When patients act up ; jealousy ; resentment of new patients

Upon long absences of staff ( hospitalisation etc)

Sudden death of patients/staff

Aged parents who shares worries for the future of their intellectually disabled children

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- **COMMON DILEMMAS –LIBERTY SAFEGUARDS**

### RESTRAINERS –

Restrain; Restrict and Deprivation of Liberty

1. to use or not to use?
2. When to use?
3. Legal aspects

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1. **ABORTIONS /STERILISATION**

Affects these vulnerable people with little or no understanding of happenings. *Does counselling help??*

Often affects the caregiver emotionally as it is felt to be cruel and callous if performed merely justified by maternal incompetence. *Where can they go for counselling themselves?*

Staff often face traumatic dilemmas –

??Often done at parents /legal guardians requests so that they can devote less care to their proper protection ???

Religions – judgmental ??

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- **PAINFUL TREATMENTS /THERAPIES**

- Very difficult to explain as these patients have poor understanding of need for treatment and almost impossible to solicit complete co-operation
- Emotional outbursts with crying and clinging very stressful & traumatic to all parties

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- **Scenarios for thought**

- 20 years old Downs Syndrome
  1. admitted for TOP
  2. giving up newborn child for adoption
- Mentally ill patient who was restrained after violently attacking other patients but was subsequently beaten up when restrained and unable to defend himself.
- Aged parents of intellectually disabled grown up children who worries about the future when they pass on.

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What is real and what is on show?

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*Who is leading who???*



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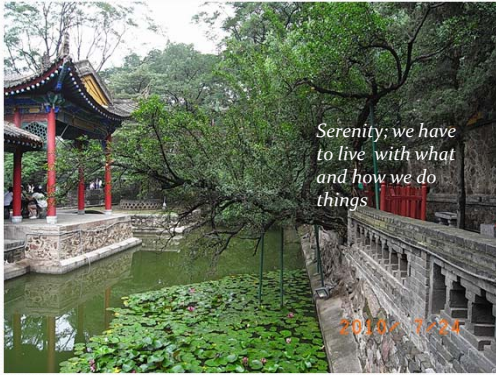
*The Patient bigger than life and the Nurse*



??? Head in sand???



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*Thank you*