

Merton Home Treatment Team

May 2019



Background

This month's patient story to the Board is being presented by Nancy, who will share her experience of the Trust's Home Treatment Team in Merton.

South West London and St Georges Mental Health Trust operate a Home Treatment Team in the following boroughs Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton, Kingston and Richmond.

Home Treatment Teams assess patients being considered for acute hospital admission, to offer intensive home treatment rather than hospital admission if feasible, and to facilitate early discharge from hospital. Key features include 24-hour availability and intensive contact in the community.

South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust aims to ensure that people who experience mental health crises and their family/carers receive high quality care from their home treatment team, with fair access for all.

Merton Home Treatment Team

Merton Home Treatment Team provides community based support for patients who reside in the borough of Merton and experiencing a mental health crisis for which otherwise a hospital admission would be considered.

The multidisciplinary team consists of a psychiatrist, mental health nurses, recovery support workers and a social worker.

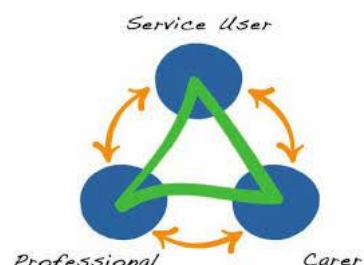
The service's interventions are value based on recovery in combination with effective risk management and the promotion of patient's independence.

The last 12 months have been exciting for the Merton Home Treatment Team. The team achieved and celebrated reaccreditation with the Home Treatment Accreditation Scheme (HTAS). This involved evaluation of the service by external reviewers and was organised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Despite an intensely rigorous review, the Merton team received some very positive feedback.



The team's culture is one of continual development and improvement. The team have continued to improve their practice around working more closely with family/carers. This has served to heighten the team's recognition and value of the role that family/carers play in the recovery of their loved ones as well as their own needs.

The current key priority action for the coming months with the Merton Home Treatment Team is undertaking work streams to support more service users in reducing the length of their hospital admissions by providing home treatment at an earlier stage in their stay. This intervention will ensure that the service users' recovery is supported conjointly with their independence. The Merton Home Treatment Team remains committed to responding in positive manner to any feedback relating to the service.



Nancy's Story

1. Attitude of Staff

(i) The majority of the health mental professionals who came to visit were extremely, professional, meticulous, pleasant and empathetic to my situation.

(ii) Although I didn't always feel like I was privy to a lot of information about my case, I did feel well informed and involved in certain aspects of my treatment plan by the Dr. Despite the fact that I only met with him once, I strongly believed that on both occasions the Dr treated me with the upmost respect, which allowed for open and frank discourse. Furthermore, the Dr actively asked for my opinion and I felt that he was actually listening, and ultimately my input was truly valued. Additionally, when he did take my opinion on board, he was honest and always adhered to medical guidelines and medical best practices.

2. Appointment Logistics

(i) I find the appointment times of 11-12pm and 5/6-8 very convenient. However, I must add that I'm not currently working, so these timeslots may affect those in employment.

(ii) Where possible, the Merton Home Treatment rang on the day of the appointment in order to solidify and confirm that I was still available, which I found really helpful and respectful.

(iii) When I was at my least stable and in a state of deep anxiety and depression, the health visitors were as brief as possible, so as not to further exacerbate things.

(iv) I was also very grateful to have my medical review at home, as I had severe difficulties leaving the house.

(v) Most of the time, I felt that I had control over which days I would like to be seen and I'm grateful for the flexibility.



3. Communication

(i) Please refer back to 2 (i).

(ii) Please refer back to 2 (ii).

(iii) I called the Merton Home Treatment mobile number on numerous occasions and I praise how responsive they are. I very rarely had to leave voicemails, and I've never had to chase the team for information, so I credit the team for being so reactive, especially given how busy they are.

(iv) On some occasions, when I was in terrible emotional distress, I called in the early hours of the morning. By doing this, I felt somewhat better knowing that I could call at any time of day for emotional support. Additionally, the fact I was able to speak to various healthcare professionals whom I'd actually met in person provided more comfort, as a relationship had already been established. Consequently, I felt more at ease calling the Merton out of hours number, as opposed to an anonymous crisis line such the Samaritans.

4. Treatment

(i) I had been prescribed Quetiapine since October/November 2018 and I continually stated to many different, GPs, psychiatrists and medical professions that I strongly felt that it added nothing to my recovery. It was agreed many times that this medication had a very negligible impact on my mental health. Yet, it was only the Merton Home Treatment Team who decided to help me slowly taper off Quetiapine, which I commend the team for.

(ii) Dr. kindly and respectfully explained that he would not prescribe a medical combination (due to its addictive nature) that had worked well for me in the past and instead, he suggested combining certain antidepressants together. I was very happy to do this, because this wasn't a treatment ever put forward to me as an option (after a decade of approximately 15 antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication), which only further highlights his dedication.

5. Activities and Social Projects

(i) Initially I was given information about various mental health hobbies e.g. Recovery café's, recovery college, and various other free activities.



Unfortunately, I was never in position to go, but I do think it is a tremendous idea.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

6. Content during visits

At times, the conversations and questions during the visits felt perfunctory and didn't necessarily provide much value.

Whilst I'm aware that time during each appointment is limited, it might be worth exploring short activities to stimulate and positively challenge the patient. This is especially vital due to the long waiting period for counselling or psychotherapy.

During my last visit, I recalled that the nurse reminded me of some long-term aspirations which had completely been erased from my memory due to the severe emotional state I was in. This positive experience reminded me of my previous goals and there was a slight positive change in my attitude.

I believe that short, positive interactions and activities might provide variety during visits by eliminating some of the monotony and repetition. It may even help to remind patients that they do in fact have a future:

Short conversations and activities may include:

- Mood monitor chart to gain a global overview of how certain feelings have changed between visits*
- Support system sheet (Preferably established right at the beginning)*

Nancy's Story continued..

- *Record of Little Victories.* - Ask patients to keep a record/diary about one achievement (irrespective of size) from that day. E.g. Showering, cleaning, leaving house, listening to music. During times of crisis and emotional turmoil, merely discussing a small goal may not be enough, having a tangible record and visibly writing down small achievements might help with feelings of hopelessness.

Next Steps and Way Forward

Beverley Baldwin, Head of Nursing and Quality said: "Merton Home Treatment Team has recently been HTAS accredited through the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Meeting this standard required the team to evidence that the teams practice meets with agreed criteria and ratings for Home Treatment Teams.

The Acute and Urgent Care Service Line aims to have all the Home Treatment Teams (Merton, Sutton, Wandsworth, Kingston and Richmond) reach this national standard which will provide assurance of the quality of care provided by the teams. Richmond Home Treatment Team was recently assessed by Healthwatch and they found a number positive outcomes pleasing to hear that most current.

patients recalled their assessment taking place soon after being referred, with most estimating that it took the place the day after referral at the latest.

Patients said that the assessment questions were effective at identifying their needs and that staff conducted assessments at a measured pace which gave them time to reflect and properly consider their responses.

The service line would like to thank Nancy for this valuable feedback and will use the feedback to positively to continuously improve services in Merton and across the other Home Treatment Teams."

Presentation:

Service user: Nancy

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