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**Using the VdTMoCA in Practice**

**Helping support staff gain confidence in their role, skills and abilities.**

Riahna Crooke



**A little about me**

My name is Riahna, I work as a Band 3 Technical Instructor on Robinson Ward. Robinson Ward is a medium secure service for males of a working age within the Men’s Mental Health Pathway at St. Andrews Healthcare, Northampton. It is also recognised as a Centre of Excellence for the use of the VdT Model of Creative Ability within clinical practice. I was completely new to the model when I first joined the ward.

**My role and how the VdTMoCA helps me understand this**

My role involves me working alongside the occupational therapists to help deliver and plan therapy sessions. The model helps identify and target areas that may need developing, which guides our preparation and reasoning on delivering particular sessions.

**How the VdTMoCA helps me understand the way the patients present**

The model enables us to identify the level of creative ability on which a patient is functioning, guiding particular areas that may need developing and therefore I have a huge indicator on why a patient may be presenting in a certain way.

**The model helps me in knowing how to interact with patients…**

I find the model to be a great tool in helping me interact with patients because it is so detailed in its description of each level and the handling principles, giving you advice on the most effective ways to communicate with the different levels.

**The VdTMoCA helps me understand how to present and carry out activities with patients of different levels of functioning**

The model informs you of the treatment aims on each level; pairing this information with the handling principles and structuring gives me a clear idea on what is going to be an effective and beneficial task.

**The model helps with knowing what to write in clinical notes**

Due to the detailed structure of the model I feel that I am able to confidently write my clinical notes and have theory to support my writing, I find that understanding the treatment aims and the developmental needs of the patient can help me precisely explain why a session was structured in a specific way and what therapeutic (handling) techniques were used to guide the session.

**Do I feel confident in the treatment I provide?**

I do feel confident in the treatment that I provide- the Occupational Therapists on the ward are amazing and I’m very lucky to work alongside them.

I also find that the beauty of this model is that you are able to identify the smallest of changes, and being able to notice them changes not only reassures me that the therapy team is going in the right direction but it also gives me great confidence and pride.

**Can I confidently explain to other members of staff what I am doing?**

I’ve worked in previous places where I would have to facilitate sessions, which held no true purpose and were perceived as ‘leisure’ activities rather than ’treatment’ sessions; but since my introduction to Robinson Ward and the model I feel I am confident in explaining my reasoning behind doing a task/ session. One of the reasons I feel so confident is because as previously mentioned I have seen the impact the model has had on patients. The model helps me understand areas that patients need to develop and by understanding those areas helps me inform other members of staff why I am facilitating a session in a certain way.

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