

Changing the culture of care

By **Karen Haynes**
Rep/Ex Staff

On July 22, Copper Sky Lodge in Spruce Grove became the first supported living facility in Canada to partner with Dementia Care Matters as a Butterfly Care Home.

Dementia Care Matters, founded by Dr. David Sheard (from the U.K.), is an organization that strives to change the culture of care for residents with dementia. The goal is to no longer see residents as a series of symptoms but to provide "emotion-based" care, recognizing that feelings matter most.

"Dementia care can be so different," Sheard said. "People living with dementia are more feeling-

beings than thinking-beings. When you can no longer rely on facts, logic, reason and memory, then feelings matter most. It is imperative for dementia care to be about really great emotional care."

Copper Sky Lodge will embrace this school of thought for the next 12 months as they set out as a Butterfly Care Home — what Sheard has labelled the 50-some medical sites involved in the program.

"Butterflies create colour and create moments," he said. "They flit in seconds to change lives and at times, just learn to be still. The Butterfly household model of care turns staff into butterflies by tapping into their own emotional intelligence."

"We unfortunately can't fix

dementia but we can fix our approach. (We need to) join people in their reality, in their world and not challenge their 'truth.' Instead, accepting people in their reality and learning to love people as they are, works," Sheard said.

"When you believe this, people with dementia come alive again. So called 'expressive behaviours' disappear and although their condition is degenerative, it is still possible to reach the spirit inside someone."

Currently, there are two cottages for special dementia care that house a combined 27 people at Copper Sky Lodge. Staff will first implement the Butterfly model here.

Nicole Gaudet, vice-president of

Choices in Community Living, expects the program to bring all kinds of changes to the lodge.

"The spaces are going to change. We are going to create an even

more lively environment with stimulating and interactive designs to keep people engaged," she said, adding that staff will begin to provide more one-on-one, personal, empathetic and responsive care.



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— *Dr. David Sheard on the Butterfly Care Home model*

"It's going to be a journey. Engagement and feelings-based care is absent in most facilities — hospitals, long-term care, supportive living, group homes — and it's something that is both possible and necessary."

Some of the changes coming to Copper Sky Lodge will dissolve the barriers between staff and res-

idents, give residents physical and emotional freedom and create meaningful ways to occupy them.

Staff may no longer wear uniforms. They may sit and eat meals together with residents. Staff will be encouraged to show love and comfort to residents with hugs.

People may be freely able to go outside into safe enclosed areas without needing doors unlocked or having to be accompanied. One goal will be for people with dementia to regularly do domestic activities throughout the day.

The Butterfly model shifts meals from being a chore to a social experience by providing meal choice at the time of meal, rather than in advance.

And, during mealtime, staff will work to keep conversations going using objects, items in their pockets and conversation cards on the tables.

For Gaudet, this culture change is a welcomed initiative at Copper Sky Lodge that will hopefully spur other facilities to explore emotion-based care for people with dementia.



Karen Haynes Reporter/Examiner

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