

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

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### You matter

NHS Lanarkshire aims to provide a high quality service which reflects the needs of our communities. This means listening and responding to comments to help improve the service we deliver.

If you have any concerns regarding your treatment or health between appointments/ visits then please contact the Ward Manager.



# Using Doll Therapy in the Ward

Information for  
Family Members and Carers  
Old Age Psychiatry

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NHS Lanarkshire General  
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**NHS inform** - The national health information service for Scotland.

[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)  
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please e-mail: Translation.  
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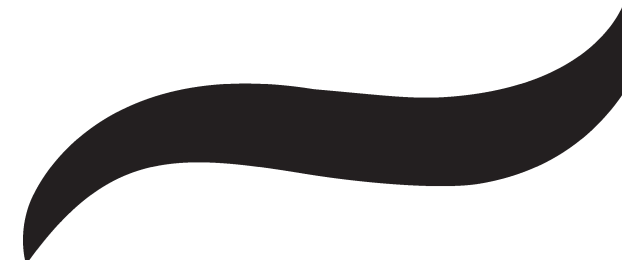


[www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk)

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## WHAT IS DOLL THERAPY?

Doll Therapy is an evidence based therapeutic intervention used in Dementia care to meet an individual's needs.

It has been shown to reduce distress and improve emotional well-being and communication in some people with dementia.

Doll therapy can be used at all stages of dementia and can sometimes provide an alternative to using medication. However, it is not for everyone.

## WHY USE DOLL THERAPY?

A psychological assessment may identify a need of the patient that is currently not being met, such as:

- ❖ the need for comfort/affection/company
- ❖ the need for meaningful occupation/a purpose

### Case example:

John became very distressed when his family were not in visiting him, and could be aggressive and angry towards staff on the ward. After assessment, staff realised he needed affection and comfort and started doll therapy. John experienced the doll as soothing and comforting, and this greatly reduced his distress.

### Case example:

Betty used to work as a nursery nurse and raised three children alone. She loved being needed and busy, and she was distressed and agitated while in one of our inpatient wards because she didn't have any work. After assessment, staff realised she had a need to keep busy and be helpful, and started doll therapy with her. Looking after the doll gave her a role and her distress and agitation decreased.

## HOW WE INTRODUCE DOLL THERAPY

Dolls will be sat upon chairs or small tables within the ward to allow patients to use them should they choose to.

It is the choice of patient whether the doll is used. We will never force anyone to use one.

Research has shown men and women can both benefit from doll therapy. Men will not be discouraged from using a doll.

## CAUTIONARY POINTS

Always ask permission to take the doll away from the person you are visiting if you need to.

Never remove the doll as punishment.

## OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

Refer to the doll by whatever name the person chooses to use, e.g. 'doll', 'baby' etc. If you do not know how they refer to it, asking "what do you have here?" can help.

## PRECAUTIONS

Sometimes Doll Therapy may trigger unhappy memories for the individual or they may become over-invested in looking after the doll, perhaps leading to exhaustion. If this occurs we will discontinue Doll Therapy.

## COMMON CONCERNS

Some people think using Doll Therapy is childish and deceptive, but research studies conducted in hospitals and other dementia care settings have shown that it can be effective in reducing distress. It is important to select activities suited to clients' current abilities.

Further background information and examples of Doll Therapy studies can be accessed via Internet or by speaking to staff on the ward.

**If you have any concerns or wish to discuss the use of Doll Therapy, please do not hesitate to talk to a member of staff.**