The Eden Alternative™

A philosophy of resident directed care in aged care and community care

Licensee of the Eden Alternative Inc, Rochester NY USA
Overview

• What is the Eden Alternative?

• Why is it relevant for both sectors?

• What can you do for your home or organisation?
The Eden Alternative™

- Focuses on the elimination of Loneliness, Helplessness and Boredom
- Based on 10 Principles of the Eden Alternative
- Challenges the biomedical & institutional models of care
- Challenges traditional organisational culture
The Eden Alternative™

- Is a model of resident / client directed care
- Has a practical framework for all operators
- Staff and client / resident empowerment is paramount
- Meaningfulness, Relationships and Wellbeing are key outcomes
In the beginning….

- The Eden Alternative founded in the USA in 1991
- In 2000 by Dr Bill Thomas comes to Oz
- Great excitement engendered
- Eden in Oz starts 2001

- 3 groups of 50 attended first Eden Associate training
- Many people inspired and were proactive
- Many supported by their organisations
- Many not supported by their organisations
Diffusion of Innovation

- Early 2000 – 2005 – a lot of interest
- The Eden Alternative was & is ‘ahead of its time’
- Expectation that homes & organisations would drive the culture change required
- Lack of Board & CEO support stifled growth
- Many cherry picked the Eden Principles
- 2007 – Eden Alternative starts in NZ
- 2010 – selected as top 10 Innovation in Aged Care in Australia
Take home message then

- People heard pets, plants and children was all that was needed to change things
- Some people trained their staff
- Some homes & organisations committed to the Eden Registry
- Some decided activities staff could implement “Eden” as it was easy to do…!!!
- Not everyone heard ‘Culture Change’
What the Eden Alternative isn’t

• It isn’t a program; It isn’t fluffy!
• It isn’t all about plants, animals and children
• It isn’t only something for the DT’s or Activities and lifestyle people to ‘implement’
• It isn’t someone else’s job…but every ones job and responsibility!!!
The Wake Up Call!

• The current system is ‘broken’
• Aging is not about decline
• Loneliness, Helplessness, & Boredom are killing our elders
• Institutional model focuses on quality of care issues not wellbeing
• Culture change takes time & effort
• Elders deserve a better life.
Eden Alternative definition of Person Centred Care

- Person directed care looks at unique needs, preferences and desires of the individual in question
- Considers that all elders have the capacity to continue to live a life with meaning, no matter their frailty
- Global reimagining of an elder centred environment
Shift our thinking

• ‘What would life be like if we could see the soul of each person rather than what we wear on the outside?’
Culture Change Transformation

- Personal
- Organisational
- Physical
Principle 1 - Problem Statement

The three plagues of loneliness, helplessness, and boredom account for the bulk of suffering in a human community.
Principle 2 – Creating Home

- An elder centred community commits to creating a human habitat where life revolves around close and continuing contact with children, plants, and animals.
- These relationships provide a pathway to a life worth living.
Eden Life Long Living

- Is based on the belief that individuals with cognitive disabilities can have a good quality of life and continue to grow and learn within a supportive living environment.

- It requires meaningful engagement and a focus on wellbeing.
3. LONELINESS:
Loving companionship is the antidote to loneliness

4 HELPLESSNESS:
Opportunities to give as well as receive care

5 BOREDOM:
Variety & spontaneity
Elders in Action – Camera Club

Geelong Show Awards

Award winning
Principle 6, 7 & 8…doing too much!

6. MEANINGLESS ACTIVITY:
Corrodes the human spirit unless it is meaningful

7. MEDICATION OVER CARE:
Rely too heavily on medical treatment

8. EMPOWERMENT OF ELDERS/RESIDENTS:
How decisions are made
9. GROWTH:
Creating an Elder-centered community is a never-ending process.

10. WISE LEADERSHIP:
Lifeblood of the struggle against the plagues
“Growing old is like being increasingly penalized for a crime you haven’t committed”
“Well-being is a much larger idea than either quality of life or customer satisfaction. It is based on a holistic understanding of human needs and capacities.

Well-being is elusive, highly subjective, and the most valuable of all human possessions.”

Ref: Dr. William Thomas, What Are Old People For?
Eden Alternative™
Domains of Wellbeing

1. Identity
2. Autonomy
3. Growth
4. Security
5. Connectedness
6. Meaning
7. Joy
Meaningful engagement

• Think of your home or organisation as a sailing ship, which sails through time
• Pay attention to rhythm of daily life – every house has it’s own song…every song changes over the years
• What is your song?
• What is your story?
The Eden Alternative is an Experiential Model

- Each person has a unique story to tell
- Many complex abilities are preserved
- The brain remains plastic & new learning can occur
- Cultivate close relationships throughout the care environment
- Wellbeing is not dependent on cognitive or functional ability

Ref: Dementia beyond Drugs – Dr Al Power - p.85
Fern Haven Story

- Rural Putaruru NZ
- Household Model
- 20 residents – level 3 dementia
- Home environment
- Everyone sees the person, not the disease
- Daily rhythm changes depending upon the residents needs
- Staff are empowered and productive
Resident choice – a chook house

- Fern Haven residents requested a chook house
- All those interested involved in chook selection, names, chook care plan
- First eggs – cooked breakfast the next morning!!!
“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them”.

Albert Einstein
Some things to consider

• Put yourself in their shoes
• Is the environment supportive or controlling?
• How are relationships developed & deepened?
• What is a client or resident’s daily pleasure?
• How do residents / clients give & receive care?
Take home message today...

- There isn’t a ‘cure’ for old age
- The Eden Alternative is an alternative to a nursing home or institutional service setting
- Requires empowerment at all levels
- Doesn’t require therapy…requires participation in life
- People are still able to learn & grow
Furthermore

• Elders must be given a voice in how they gain and maintain optimal wellness and not what the system thinks they need
• Minimisation of biomedical intervention has shown that residents do improve their capacity to be engaged
• Meaningful relationships are important for everyone – including ourselves
• Eden Alternative should be mainstream
i always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that, then i realized i am somebody

last word
see you at table 20
Want to know more?

e: sally@edeninovznz.com.au

e: admin@edeninovznz.com.au

m: 0404 144 707

w: www.edeninovznz.com.au

w: www.edenalt.org

Facebook.com/edeninovznz