

THE DIFFERENCE WE'RE MAKING: SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS CHEF DAY

AT A GLANCE

- The Learning Disability Speech and Language team felt that the Chef Day was a successful, practical way of getting to grips with new diet standardisation that left them feeling more knowledgeable and confident to share experience with the people they support, thereby providing better quality care.
- The day also produced photographs that can be used in care plans to demonstrate different consistency levels and help carers with preparing food.

A CONSISTENT APPROACH

People with Learning Disabilities can be at greatest risk of eating and drinking difficulties which can cause choking and contribute to aspiration pneumonia. This may be caused by a physical problem or behaviours at meal times that increase the risk of choking such as: eating too quickly, eating large pieces of food, not chewing thoroughly and talking when eating.

In early 2019 the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) was launched in NHFT. IDDSI aims to provide standardised terminology and definitions to describe texture modified foods and thickened liquids used for individuals with dysphagia of all ages, in all care settings, and all cultures. The changes to the descriptions are to make sure everyone is doing the same thing so food and drinks are made to the correct consistency, and also make sharing information about food and fluid textures easier and safer. All food and drink is now described from Level 0 to Level 7 with a descriptive term such as 'minced and moist' (Level 5).

In order to launch this initiative within NHFT, the Learning Disability Speech and Language Therapists (SaLTs) held a 'Chef Day' to familiarise themselves with the new standardisation and test out some meals so that they can advise service users, families and carers accordingly. They worked through all the new levels and carried out the testing methods within the IDDSI framework to make sure they had achieved the desired consistency (level).



The three course menu for the day was:

- Ham and egg salad
- Quorn meatballs in tomato sauce with pasta
- Chocolate avocado pudding

Salad was chosen as many carers want to provide healthy meals and often ask how they can give people salad on a modified diet.

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SHARING OUR LEARNING

The team shared their experiences on Twitter, using the hashtags **#SwallowAware2019 #IDDSI #Dysphagia**. They had lots of great feedback and conversations about the Chef Day online.

The team have networked successfully with other SaLTs across the UK in a variety of services, adding to their experience and the growing IDDSI resource base that will benefit patients and service users across the country. Other health providers have sought permission to use the photographs produced during the NHFT Chef Day as training for their own staff and carers.

Closer to home, the team also feel that the photos they produced during the Chef Day have been helpful references to include in care plans, to demonstrate to carers and service users how their food should look.



THE SALT TEAM ON THEIR CHEF DAY

LIVING OUR VALUES

IMPROVING LIVES



Food is not just about taste; presentation matters as well, and just because somebody has difficulties in chewing or swallowing, it doesn't mean that they shouldn't still enjoy their food. One of the key things that the SALT team wanted to demonstrate is that individual food items should be modified separately, so as to maintain colour and taste. This helps individuals to still recognise and enjoy their food. They therefore took photos so this could be shared with carers and service users, helping to maintain quality of life.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Practical workshops for carers and service users who would like more hands-on support with food modification.

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