

# Balcary Ward – Midpark Hospital

## Dynamic Appraisal of Situational Aggression Tool (DASA)

### Who we are and what we do?

Balcary ward is a six bedded Intensive Psychiatric Care Unit (IPCU). It is designed to care for patients with mental health problems and associated behavioural difficulties which seriously compromise their physical or psychological wellbeing and / or that of others. As a result they cannot be safely assessed or treated in an open acute inpatient facility.



**CHANGE...**  
Through collaboration with patients and our Occupational Therapy (OT) Team we have developed a DASA protocol, interest checklist and activity planner which outlines risk specific, person centred, structured activities and targeted clinical interventions for patients with often complex and challenging needs. Aiming to improve the quality of care and keep both staff and patients safe.



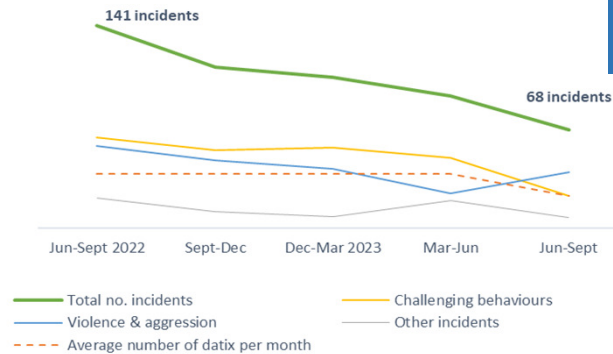
**EVALUATION...**  
We implemented structured meaningful activity with two patients by commencing an OT led group once per week based around sensory input which is flexible, graded and adapted to meet individual needs. Nursing staff have engaged in meaningful activity out with OT times in line with patient preference.

Ideas for Change??

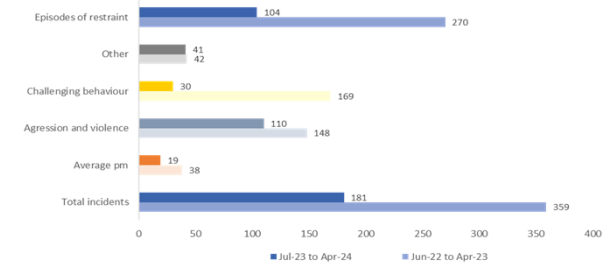
Focus: Reduce the number of violent incidents on the ward

The ward rolled out training and tested the Dynamic Appraisal Situational Aggression (DASA) IV tool.

Number of DATIX incidents (2022-2023)



Number of DATIX incidents (2023-2024)



**Benefits/Background** - The anticipated benefits of using the DASA tool include an overall reduction in violent and aggressive incidents and incidence of restraint. Prevention of violent acts depends on both the ability to assess a patient's potential for aggression and interventions to reduce or mitigate the risk. Using a recognised tool demonstrates greater predictive ability than clinical judgement alone. Using the DASA allows clinicians to identify high risk patients for early intervention and improved risk management.

Key areas of assessment in the DASA Tool are Irritability, Impulsivity, Unwillingness to follow directions, Sensitivity to perceived provocation, Easily angered, Negative attitudes and Verbal threats.

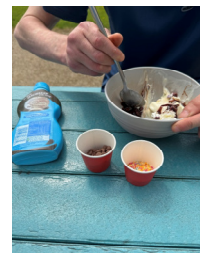
### RAG SYSTEM

- Score of 0 = low risk for aggression
- Score of 1-3 = moderate risk for aggression
- Score of 4-7 = high risk for aggression

The DASA manual emphasises the need to integrate assessment with prevention strategies. Those strategies should be carefully chosen to be proportionate to the level of risk posed. They should not be overly restrictive due to the harm that this can cause. Research suggests that interventions which have an impact on reducing aggression and violence often involve meaningful activity which alleviates boredom for the patients, builds routine and increases motivation rather than more restrictive interventions. Engaging with patients on a more informal level also.

### Impact and Learning

- Initial success of the DASA - reduction in number of incidents from an average of 37.5 per month prior to the introduction on the DASA, to 22 per month the 11 weeks of testing the DASA tool.
- Sustained reduction particularly in incidence of challenging behaviours
- 52% decrease in number of incidents** from 141 to 68
- 25% reduction in aggression and violence** from 148 to 110
- 61% reduction in episodes of restraint** from 270 to 104



A big thank you to all the OT's, patients and staff of Balcary Ward, without whom this couldn't have happened.

### NEXT STEPS...

Following PDSA cycle we will roll out to include all patients and implemented fully into patient care plans. We will evaluate any reduction in restrictive practice, aggression and violence using previous years reporting.

Patient Feedback from surveys... More activities required, more OT and nursing staff input around access to activities, arts and crafts and books