

## Optimization of Multi-Disciplinary Expertise and Resource for End-Stage Renal Failure (ESRF) Patient Care

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**Abstract :** Over the years, the profile of end-stage renal patients placed under The National Kidney Foundation Singapore (NKFS) dialysis program has evolved, with a gradual incline in the number of patients with behavior-related issues. With these challenging profiles, social workers and counsellors are often expected to oversee behavior management, through referrals from its partnering colleagues. Due to the segregation of tasks usually found in many hospital-based multi-disciplinary settings, social workers' and counsellors' interventions are often seen as an endpoint, limiting other stakeholders' involvement that could otherwise be potentially crucial in managing such patients. While patients' contact in local hospitals often leads to eventual discharge, NKFS patients are mostly long term. It is interesting to note that these patients are regularly seen by a team of professionals that includes doctors, nurses, dietitians, exercise specialists in NKFS. The dynamism of relationships presents an opportunity for any of these professionals to take ownership of their potentials in leading interventions that can be helpful to patients. As such, it is important to have a framework that incorporates the strength of these professionals and also channels empowerment across the multi-disciplinary team in working towards wholistic patient care. This paper would like to suggest a new framework for NKFS's multi-disciplinary team, where the group synergy and dynamics are used to encourage ownership and promote empowerment. The social worker and counsellor use group work skills and his/her knowledge of its members' strengths, to generate constructive solutions that are centered towards patient's growth. Using key ideas from Karl's Tomm Interpersonal Communications, the Communication Management of Meaning and Motivational Interviewing, the social worker and counsellor through a series of guided meeting with other colleagues, facilitates the transmission of understanding, responsibility sharing and tapping on team resources for patient care. As a result, the patient can experience personal and concerted approach and begins to flow in a direction that is helpful for him. Using seven case studies of identified patients with behavioral issues, the social worker and counsellor apply this framework for a period of six months. Patient's overall improvement through interventions as a result of this framework are recorded using the AB single case design, with baseline measured three months before referral. Interviews with patients and their families, as well as other colleagues that are not part of the multi-disciplinary team are solicited at mid and end points to gather their experiences about patient's progress as a by-product of this framework. Expert interviews will be conducted on each member of the multi-disciplinary team to study their observations and experience in using this new framework. Hence, this exploratory framework hopes to identify the inherent usefulness in managing patients with behavior related issues. Moreover, it would provide indicators in improving aspects of the framework when applied to a larger population.

**Keywords :** behavior management, end-stage renal failure, satellite dialysis, multi-disciplinary team

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