



The 'Eden Alternative' Care Home Philosophy

The Eden Alternative is a global 'care philosophy' developed by Dr Bill Thomas of the US in the 90's, who, as a consulting New York Geriatrician, became determined to address Care Home **Residents' feelings of loneliness, helplessness and boredom** as he saw them. With a team of experts, he developed strategies to innovate the culture of care to make care what 'it ought to be'. It now operates in 20 countries, and has been running 30 years.

Here, with something like 3% of UK Homes rated as Outstanding, but recent Inspections showing Homes rated Good still only in the high 50's, Requiring Improvement in the low 30's, and those rated Inadequate between 2% - 8% it seems this 'philosophy' is very current / relevant.

The philosophy is no more than common sense, but it is a common sense that needs real clarity, leadership to implement successfully, needs effective strategies on the ground and determination to develop 'wellbeing' and empower our care teams, our residents and our wider stakeholders. It also seeks to fundamentally challenge 'ageism', the limitations of our 'medical model of care', and our overly negative focus on disease, disability and deficit.

The Eden Alternative has 10 principles that are its focus–

1. That in any setting, a risk is that people can feel lonely, helpless and / or bored.
2. That 'Edenising' homes have an abundance of different things going on, a vibrant environment, full of varied activities, connected with nature, building strong community links, expanding life histories to enrich the lived experience.
3. That an antidote to loneliness is **loving companionship**.
4. That an antidote to helplessness is the fostering of **care partnership**.
5. That an antidote to boredom is **meaningful, and spontaneous activity**.
6. That meaningless activity (and boredom) can be corrosive to the human spirit.
7. That medication is regarded as the servant of people not their 'master'.
8. That 'more say' devolves to and empowers Residents and the teams.
9. That cultural and practical innovation (or 'Edenising' a Home) is ongoing journey.
10. That effective leadership is seen as the key, and one which delivers effective education, evidence based learning and progressive development.

The journey –

- (i) A key group, including the Manager, together do a 3 day immersive training programme to become trained '**Eden Associates**'.
- (ii) an Edenising Home includes all key elements of the above Eden philosophy as part of its strategies to staff, residents and relatives to help foster the environment that staff, residents and their families wish to experience, and finally,
- (iii) each Home is '**validated**' by Eden to endorse the Homes commitment to and implementation of these elements.

It is an effective, powerful & successful philosophy. Edenising homes can achieve high levels of wellbeing amongst staff, residents / relatives, CQC result, and viability.

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