How Do You Solve A Problem Like Maria?

What About Maria?

Maria was active

Very active

Some would say too active

And some would say that she needed to be calmed down

Maria was….

- Promiscuous – she took her clothes off
- Resistive – she said no, she told you to leave- ‘f*** off you b******.’
- Interfering – she took things
- Aggressive- she shouted, she hit
- Accusatory- good person, bad person
- Non communicative- shalom, salaam a le cum

The nurses thought….

- She is agitated
- She is overactive
- She is in pain
- She is hallucinating
- She needs the Doctor

The Doctor thought

- She doesn’t appear in pain
- She will not comply with medication
- She is in the right place
- She has dementia
- What do they expect me to do?
- Try diversion
- Who is next?

The nurses thought again

- Give her to the activity organiser
- She can occupy her
- She can divert her

The activity organiser thought

- What can I do?
- She is restless
- She is confused
- She is disruptive
- She is hard work
- Care staff need to help

The care staff thought

- Don’t do that its dirty
- Don’t talk to me like that, its rude
- What if she calls me a bad person?
- What is she saying any way?
- Samuel would be ashamed
- What would her children think?

The family thought

- She is in safe hands now
- We do not need to worry
- The staff know what they are doing
- They do not need us any more

Maria thought…..

- We did not know what Maria thought
- Until

Maria’s Story

The visit of Neha and learning about Maria’s reality

Everyone thought again

- Maria is scared
- Maria is lonely
- Maria is not dirty
- Maria is embarrassed
- Maria is protective
- Maria is a heroine

….and again

- What can we say to reassure her?
- How can I show her we care?
- How can I demonstrate that she is loved?
- What is it about this place that reminds her of war?
- What can we do to help?

Enter her world…

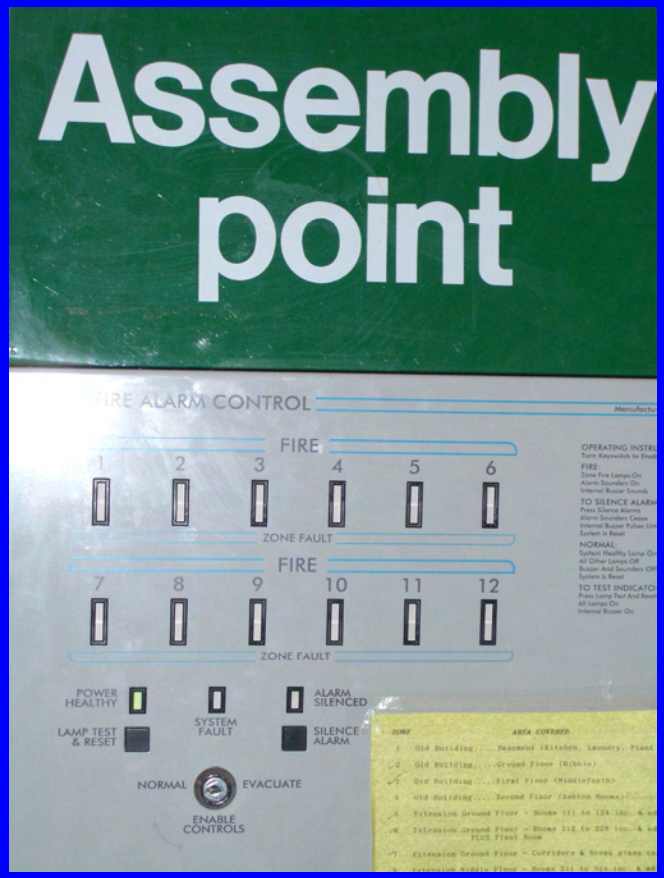
- ‘Its Ok.’
- ‘You do not have to do this’
- ‘Neha is safe’
- ‘Stay with me, I will keep you safe’
- ‘We are safe with you’
- ‘Everyone is proud of you’

What reminded Maria of war torn Hebron?

- Was it the the dark and lonely places?

The panic

- When alarms sounded

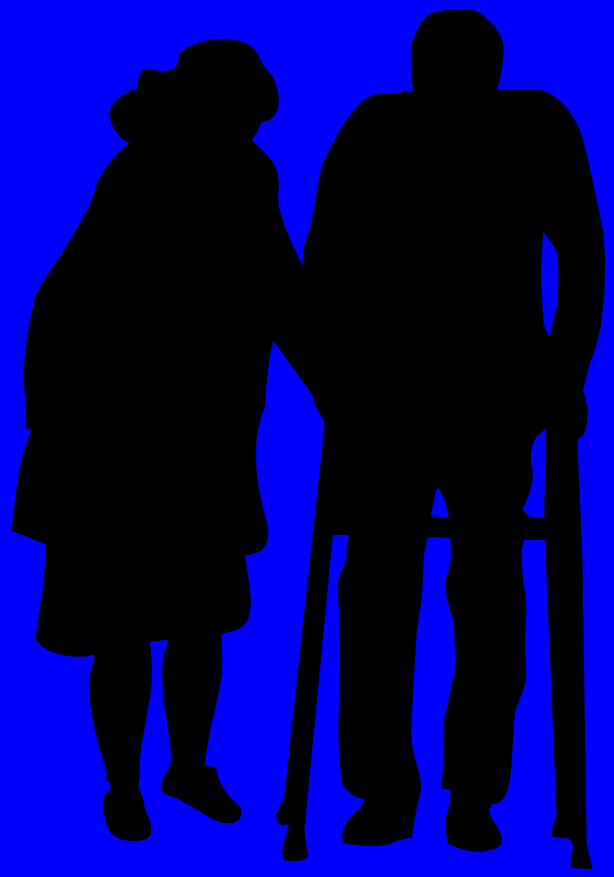


The organised marches

- Of the sick

The organised marches

- Of the wounded



The organised marches

- To collect the rations

Or …….

- The secret no go areas

- With technology that cannot be understood

And…

- Signage that scares and intimidates

Or…..

- The highly trained professionals

With….

- … their deadly weapons

Or

- The multi national peace keepers

Speaking a language she did not understand

- Unit
- Treatment room
- Snoozelen
- Agitated
- Abscond
- Challenging behaviour
- P.C.T

It was time to think again

- About familiar things
- About familiar places
- About rebuilding after the war
- About the language we use

So we…….

- Put food in the shops

Lit Up The Streets

And planted some flowers

Then we

- Ended prohibition

And

- Opened a restaurant
- With familiar things
- And a pleasant place to sit

And went outside

- And planted the gardens

And Maria

- She still liked the men
- Met Samuel in the pub for a drink and a chat
- Popped in for lunch with the ladies
- Emptied the shop
- Sat in the garden

And when it was time to go she said to the staff

- ‘F*** off you b******s’

Points for discussion
What can we learn?

- **C**ommunication - knowing Maria was good!
- **A**ttitudes - knowing ourselves was better!
- **R**espond – turn the theory into practice

- Life story, use her language, respond to feelings
- Mind our language, enable and accommodate, signage and way finding, attitude to risk
- Create the environment and make activity a whole day event

How Do We Achieve This?

- Leadership
- Know your champions and give ownership
- Reflect your community
- Train – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow
- Involve – Families, staff, community

The Benefits

- Raised moral
- Clearer sense of purpose
- Less complaints
- Better inspections
- Better retention
- Less sickness
- But most of all…….

Better quality of life for Maria, her family and her friends!

The end

or the start of a new beginning?