



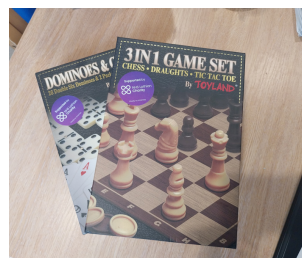
Keeping patients connected with board games

With funding from NHS Lothian Charity, staff in Canaan Ward, Royal Edinburgh Hospital purchased a number of board games such as Chess, Draughts, Dominoes, Scrabble, Ludo and Snakes and Ladders. Jackie, Activities Co-ordinator in Canaan Ward, uses the games on a daily basis with the 15 patients on the ward, who are all men and are in the latter stages of dementia. From her experience of using the games she shares the difference the games have had, illustrating how a low cost project can have a big impact for patients.



The games help my role as I can set up a group of men to play one of the games and then it frees me up to concentrate on patients who need more 1-1 support."

– Jackie, Activities Coordinator



Board games



Board games

Increasing connections

"I've noticed that the men on the ward, while comfortable together, don't often start conversations on their own. However, when I introduce a game into the group, they readily interact. As a result, I've seen men form friendships and social connections, which brings them a sense of comfort, the knowledge that they're not alone, and a feeling of being in a safe environment, and I see that it gives their self-esteem a small boost.

"The games are a good way for me to connect with these patients, as they often trigger nostalgic memories of their younger years, giving us plenty to talk about. We also have patients from many different countries and cultures on the ward, and when English isn't their first language, it can be tough to connect. Board games really help break down that barrier. Everyone seems to know how to play them, no matter where they're from, so we don't need a lot of talking. We can show how we feel through our expressions, which makes the games lively and enjoyable. It's great to see their excitement, and it gives me a chance to praise them and make them feel good."

Reducing boredom and distress

"When patients are occupied with the board games I see them relax for small moments and absorbed in the game, which can be such a comfort to those patients who are often distressed and pacing about the ward. You can feel the calm across the ward when the games come out which benefits staff and other patients and their visitors."



Some of the patients have been on the ward for a long time and I have seen the mental and physical impact boredom can have. These board games are an amazing addition to my resources to help keep patients occupied."

– Jackie, Activities Coordinator



Jackie and her games cupboard

Got a similar idea that benefits patients? Find out about funding available from [NHS Lothian Charity](https://www.nhs.uk/lothian-charity).

Report compiled by Rebecca Caulfield
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