



Turning the

COMPLEX

into CLEAR

Welcome to the Road to Recovery project



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the

COMPLEX

into CLEAR



Presented by
Carolyn Watt

for
The PLAIN conference
September 26-29, 2002
Toronto, Canada



September 27, 2002



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



A little history...

- This project was a PhD thesis about reducing hospital readmission costs by providing home care intervention
- Printed material was included as part of “the intervention”



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Who was involved?

- Over 20 groups...
- From TEGH
 - Cardiologists and family doctors
 - CardioRespiratory health services
 - Pharmacists, Emergency staff
- CCACs
- Toronto Public Health
- Home care service providers



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



How did we start?

- The team had already met for several months before CWA got involved.
- We were invited in to help with some forms because the research study needed consistent collection “devices”.



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



What did we start with?

- The pathway...this was the document used by nursing staff to define the criteria for recovery.
- Assorted brochures from food manufacturers.



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



The materials

- Various documents were available to heart attack patients.
- Total weight was over 5 lbs – more than you were supposed to carry after a heart attack!



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



The process

- When we studied the paperwork process of how information travelled **(the communication loop)**, we saw a few problems...
- Let's call them issues...



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Issues in the process

- Information wasn't getting to GP (Family Physician) and heart attack patients were being released before their GP knew they were in hospital.
- Follow up appointments were not happening.



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



More on the process

- Different nursing agencies were using different forms.
- There was no contact between home care nurses and GPs.
- Caregivers needed contact information.



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



And more on the process

- Patients and caregivers were overwhelmed by the volume of material available to them.
- Patients needed something to make it easy to keep track of their recovery.



Turning the
COMPLEX
into **CLEAR**

Our approach

- Determine who needs to know what.
- Determine how they want to read that information.
- Determine how to make the presentation of that information usable.



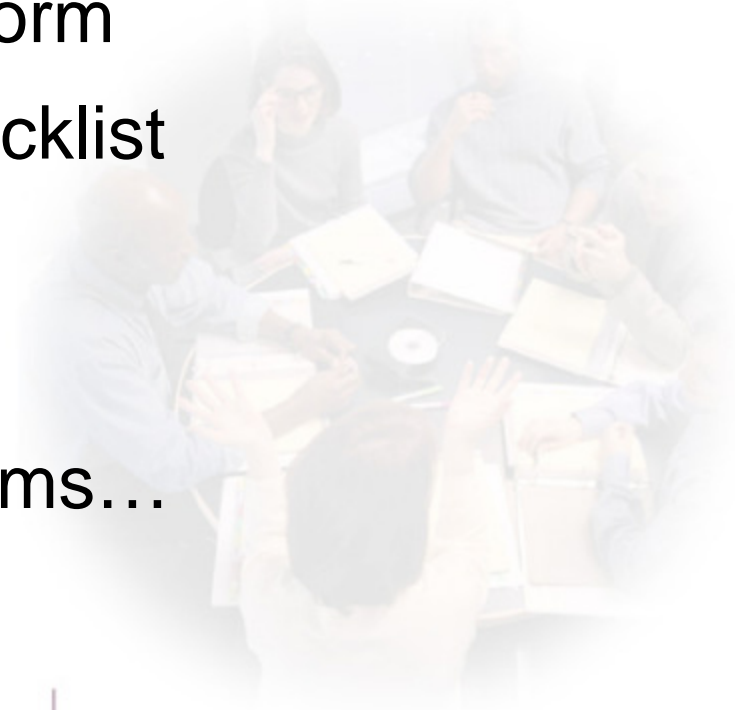
Turning the

COMPLEX
into CLEAR



We defined the documents in the “new” process

- Patient Booklet
- Discharge Form
- Nursing Checklist
- Visit Report
- Consent Forms...





Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



The booklet

- Our target audience was a multi-cultural audience, average age 65.
- The goal was to use the existing source material, consolidate and simplify it.
- We wanted to have a positive tone in the booklet.

September 27, 2002



Carolyn Watt & Associates



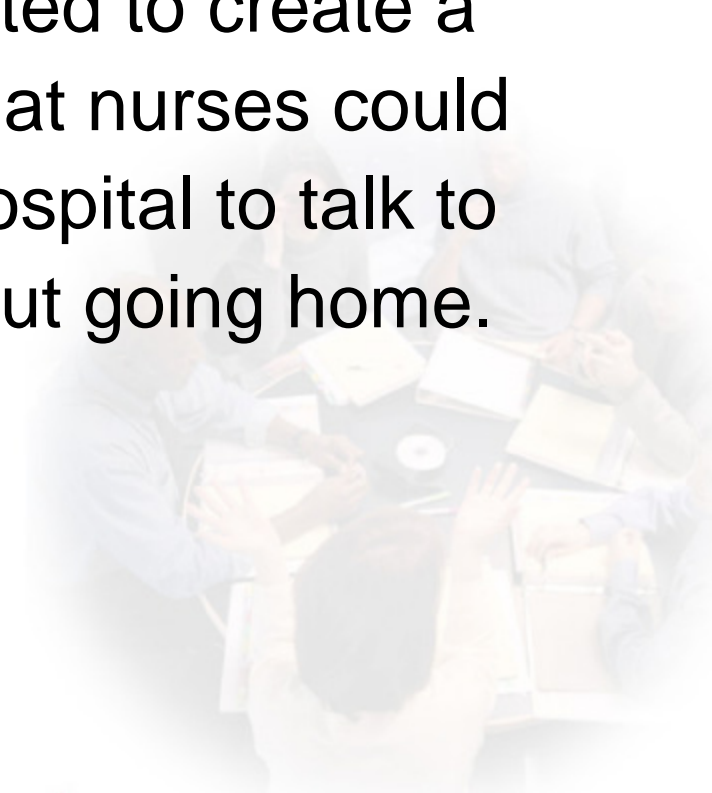
Turning the
COMPLEX
into **CLEAR**



The booklet

continued

- And we wanted to create a document that nurses could use in the hospital to talk to patients about going home.





Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



The booklet

continued

- We created several sections in the booklet:
 - Going home
 - Getting better
 - Preventing another heart attack
 - Their Recovery Diary
 - Patient Notes
 - Community Resources information



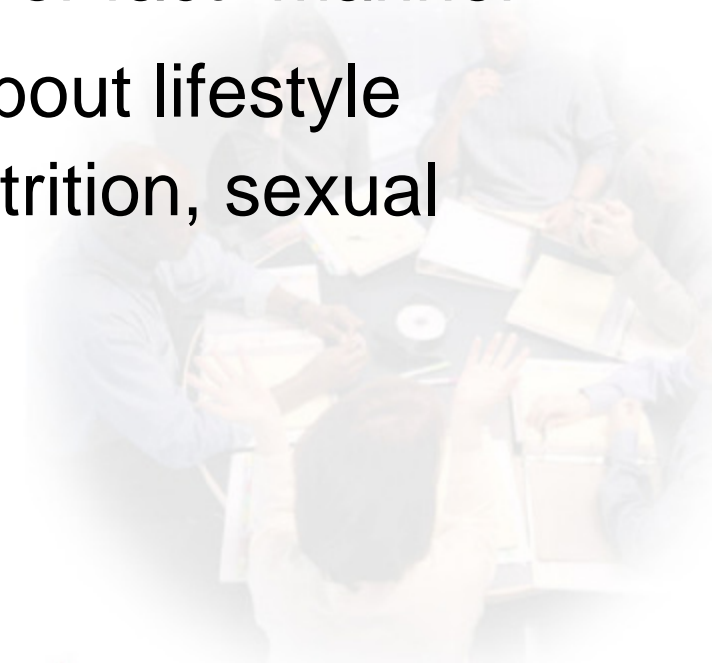
Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



The booklet

continued

- We treated the topics in a very “matter-of-fact” manner.
- We talked about lifestyle changes, nutrition, sexual relations.



September 27, 2002



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



The Recovery Diary

- This was the second half of the booklet. It was designed to be helpful and easy to complete.
- It was a way for home care nurses to see progress between visits.

September 27, 2002



Carolyn Watt & Associates



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Discharge Form

- The biggest change here was giving the patient a copy of this form. We put a pocket in the back of the booklet.
- It was also faxed to the GP when the patient was discharged.



Turning the
COMPLEX
into **CLEAR**



Discharge Form

continued

- There were 3 sections:
 - In-hospital Notes
 - Discharge Planning
 - Notes to Family Doctor
- All appointments were set up **before** the patient left the hospital.



Turning the

COMPLEX

into CLEAR



Discharge Form

continued

- Medical terms were used on the form because they were conditions or names of tests. The language used was based on audience level.
- Plain language instructions were used for the appointment section.



Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Nursing Checklist

- There were several agencies involved in the project and each one had their own forms.
- We needed “consistent” data collection devices.
- There was a lot of material, so the form became a booklet.

September 27, 2002



Carolyn Watt & Associates



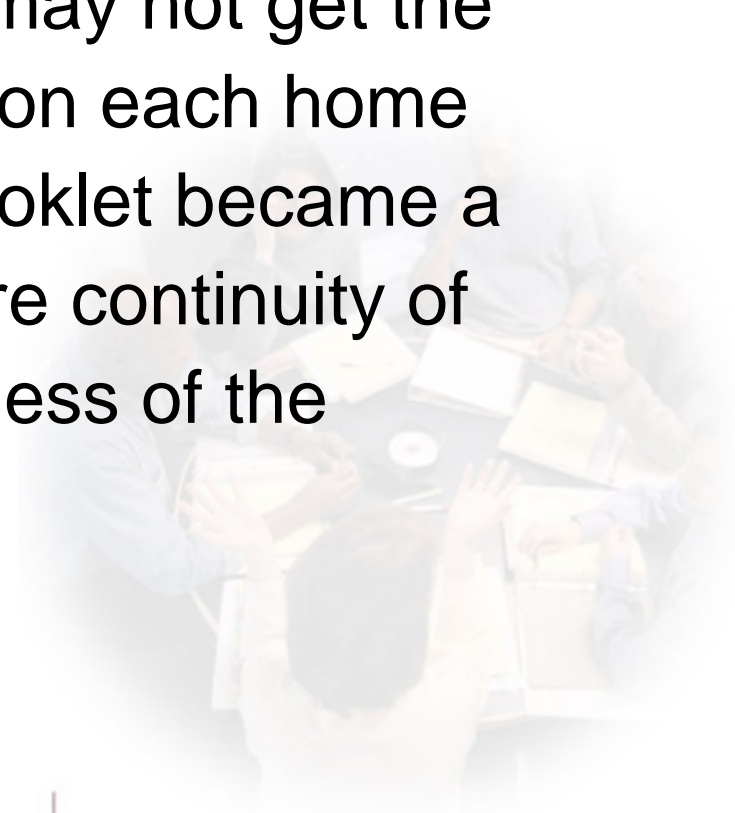
Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Nursing Checklist

continued

- The patient may not get the same nurse on each home visit...the booklet became a way to ensure continuity of care, regardless of the provider.





Turning the
COMPLEX
into **CLEAR**



Nursing Checklist

continued

- There were 4 parts to the booklet:
 - A chart listing conditions and what the patient should be able to accomplish over time.
 - Visit Record
 - Nurses's Notes
 - Referral Record

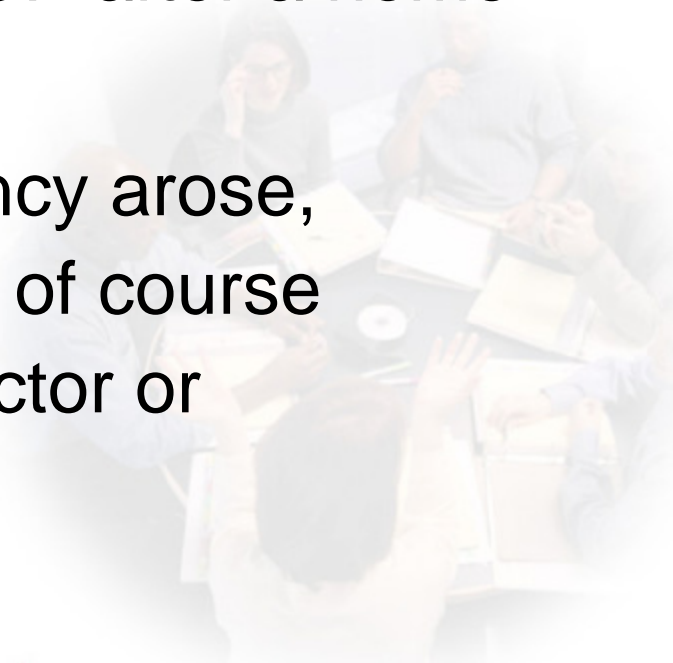


Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Visit Report

- One page document to be faxed to the GP after a home care visit.
- If an emergency arose, nurses would of course phone the doctor or hospital...





Turning the
COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Nurses were trained

- Both hospital and home care nurses were trained on the “new system” by the project leader.





Turning the

COMPLEX
into CLEAR



Nurses were asked about the new system

- They said it took a little longer but they felt it was easy to do and allowed them to provide better care to their patients.
- Patients liked having the information “all in one place”.



Turning the
COMPLEX
into **CLEAR**

Did the materials make a difference?

- The project leader has submitted papers for publication in nurses journals about the study.
- She recommended that as a best practice, professional writers should be used as it makes a positive impact on the materials.



Turning the
COMPLEX
into **CLEAR**

Did plain language make a difference?

- YES!
- To the patients
- To the GPs
- To the nurses – in the hospital and home care
- To the CCACs



Turning the
COMPLEX
into **CLEAR**



Thank You

CWA

7181 Woodbine Ave., Suite
234

Markham, Ontario
Canada L3R 1A3

905-470-0139

www.carolynwatt.com





Road to Recovery project

Carolyn Watt

www.carolynwatt.com/

Carolyn Watt is President of Carolyn Watt & Associates and one of its Clarity Consultants. Her corporate mantra is "Turning the complex into clear." She has more than 20 years' experience in communications, workflow simplification, and training, for both public- and private-sector clients. She teaches Usability Evaluation at the University of Toronto.