Environmental Management of Delirium

The patient’s room or bed area should be as uncluttered as possible. Remove all unnecessary furniture or medical equipment. This assists in minimising confusion and will also reduce the risk of equipment being used as a weapon. For a patient with an agitated or hyperactive delirium the aim is for a low stimulus environment.

- Ensure a safe environment: the patient may need a nursing special, falls prevention strategies, a low bed.
- Provide visual access to an outside area where possible to help with orientation.
- If patients have sensory impairment, ensure they wear sensory aids and these are working.
- Reduce noise and activity especially unexpected and irritating noises.
- Have familiar objects close to the bed
- Ensure bright light in daytime and darker at night with a night light in the room and toilet.
- Provide orientating signs, whiteboard, large face clock and familiar items like family photos
- Single room where possible, and avoid room changes
- Remove items that are misidentified and causing anxiety. Paintings can be misinterpreted as being frightening.
- Cover mirrors if necessary.
- Ensure room is a comfortable temperature for the patient.
- Ensure room provides visibility for staff
- Plan care where possible to provide uninterrupted sleep at night.