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Enhancing Life: Promoting Meaningful Interventions to Support Individuals with Dementia

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Enhancing Life: Promoting Meaningful Interventions to Support Individuals with Dementia

Keelan Blasius, Dr. Hebert

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The purpose of this capstone was to implement meaningful interventions to support the quality of life in individuals with dementia. Those with dementia often lack the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities, leading to increased loneliness and decreased quality of life (Mansbach et al., 2017). Helping individuals with dementia maintain participation in meaningful activities can help to improve relationships, mood, and quality of life, as well as slow the rate of cognitive decline (Jones et al., 2020). This project focused on the implementation of both individual and group sessions throughout 14-weeks to improve occupational performance and decrease feelings of loneliness.

RESULTS

Factors Measured	Pre-Test Assessment Results	Post-Test Assessment Results
Meaningfulness of Life	25%	50%
Opportunities to Engage in Activities	37.5%	87.5%
Negative Feelings (Despair, Anxiety, Depression)	75%	50%
Feelings of Loneliness	62.5%	37.5%



DISCUSSION

This project found that individuals with dementia living in long-term care settings often do not have the ability to engage in daily activities. The activities that individuals participate in have a significant impact on overall well-being, correlating with their quality of life. For individuals with dementia, meaningful activities are often overlooked due to cognitive limitations and decreased independence. It was identified that the implementation of meaningful activities can support factors such as social isolation, depression, and anxiety.

METHODS

Participants in this project consisted of both male and female residents with a diagnosis of dementia. Participants were screened with the ACLS to determine cognitive level as well as a survey to gather information about their preferred meaningful occupations. Each resident identified 2-5 occupations that they wished to participate in. 8 individuals received weekly individual intervention sessions with a feedback survey to measure success of the interventions. A men's group and women's group was also administered weekly to improve social isolation and quality of life. Intervention sessions included nail care, coffee hour, games, exercise, and education. A pre-test/post-test assessment was delivered to track progress and identify the effectiveness of this project.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The Model of Human Occupation was used as a guiding theoretical model for this capstone. MOHO emphasizes all parts of the individual and helps initiate change through the use of input and feedback. Occupational performance was addressed daily to help determine the effectiveness of interventions. Furthermore, this model of practice helped me to focus on environmental factors to make modifications as needed. This model ensured I was viewing residents through a comprehensive lens and addressing factors such as roles, routines, and rituals.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OT

- Individuals are more likely to participate in interventions if they are meaningful.
- By understanding each individual and focusing on meaningful activities, occupational therapists can help improve motivation, physical function, and mental health.
- Group therapy interventions should be utilized when possible as participants greatly benefited from social engagement.
- OT practitioners should incorporate collaboration with residents and caregivers to develop meaningful goals and promote well-being.

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