Examining assisted living residents’ participation in a group-based art therapy program

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Examining Assisted Living Residents’ Participation in a Group-Based Art Therapy Program

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Art Therapy with Older Adults

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Art Therapy

“The art process allows them to express themselves and discharge much of their affect fearlessly and unselfconsciously” (Gussak & Virshup, 1997, p.10).
Older Adults

- Role theory: role participation establishes the bases of our identity and successful role performance develops a sense of competence and self worth (Hooyman, Kiyak, 2010).
- Difficulties transitioning into long term care facilities
- Loss of a sense of autonomy
- Identity crisis often emerges out of the loss of significant roles within his/her community
- Loss of social networks
Benefits of Art Therapy with Older Adults

- Social well-being
- Personal growth
- Social connections
- Emotional and physical health
- Coping strategy
Benefits of Art Therapy with Older Adults

- “Art is a process of self expression leading to self discovery” (Gussak, p.39)
- Strong sense of belonging
- Improved self esteem
- Sense of autonomy
- Improved quality of life
Limitations/ Challenges of Art Therapy

- Age appropriate activities
- Participant interest in art
- Confidence in artistic ability
- Ability/health status
- Researching effectiveness of Art Therapy
  - Difficult to measure effectiveness (not cut and dry)
  - Lacks value, interventions are not seen as very meaningful
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Overview of Our Study

INTRODUCE AND EXAMINE AN 8 WEEK ART THERAPY PROGRAM WITH OLDER ADULTS IN ASSISTED LIVING

DETERMINE IMPACT OF ART THERAPY PROGRAM FOR ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENTS

REVIEW TARGETED OBJECTIVES FOR:
- SENSE OF COMMUNITY AMONG RESIDENTIAL PEERS (SOC)
- PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING (PWB)
- QUALITY-OF-LIFE (QOL)
- SENSE OF IDENTITY IN THE ASSISTED LIVING SETTING (SI-AS)

WAS THERE AN IMPACT, IF SO WHAT?
Methodologies

- Data collection was triangulated with...

1) a pre-test/post-test survey administered first and last day of group sessions to assess PWB, QOL, and SIC
2) 1-on-1 interviews w/ each group participant allowed co-investigator familiarity w/ participants’ life narrative and characteristics of their identity
3) daily observations of researchers using an inter-rater observation tool to assess quality of group session
Observation Tools

- Observation tool
- Interaction
- Supportive Environment
- Engagement
Observation Tools continued

One-on-one Interviews
- Identity Status Interview

Pre and Post Test Surveys
- Quality of Life Scale (Q-LES-Q-SF)
- Chavis & Acosta (2008)'s Sense of community scale (SCI-2)
- MIDUS Perceived Well-Being (PWB)
Limitations

- Problems with timeline
- Communication issues between involved parties
- Small sample size
- Attrition
Attrition

- Not what they expected
- Health concerns
- Confidence in abilities/ stress
- Pre-existing friendships
Our Activities
Ink Blot Activity
Recommendations for Future Groups:

- Consideration of the group offering time
- Need to improve communication
- Group formation process
- Pre-existing friends in the group impacted group dynamics
- Mixed cognitive abilities
- Our current model allowed for great session facilitation
Recommendations for Future Activities:

- Diversity of activities went well
- Some supplies and activities were perceived as “childish”
- Wanted to learn new artistic skills as part of the program
- Giving residents more choice in selecting which activities
Recommendations for Future Research:

- Data Collection
  - Triangulation of data
  - Measurement tools - shorten surveys
    - Use larger font with this population
  - Shorten interviews
    - Unintentional results from these interviews
  - Observational tool worked great
    - Need for more of these in research

- Data Analysis
  - Need for a larger sample size
  - Observe multiple program offerings for individual differences to help determine what factors are most important in quality group-based art therapy programs.
Questions?

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