

Fall 12-9-2021

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Recommended Citation

Hardeman, H., Gerardi, S. M., & Frank, E. (2021, December 9). Providing Care to People with Dementia: An Educational workshop. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesfall2021/23>

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Providing Care to People with Dementia: An Educational workshop

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BACKGROUND

Informal (family) caregivers face emotional, psychosocial, and physical challenges when transitioning into the role of caregiver. Dementia is a neurocognitive disorder that affects multiple functions of a person's daily life and requires varying levels of assistance to complete tasks. Occupational therapists address the safety component of daily activities and tailor each modification to the individual's roles, routines, and interests (Edwards, 2015).

PROBLEM

Caregivers of people with dementia have limited knowledge and skills needed to fulfill the caregiver role and training programs are not readily available to address their educational needs.

PURPOSE

To develop an inclusive and accessible educational workshop on the knowledge and skills needed to care for people with dementia.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & COMPONENTS

A 5-session educational program was created informed by the model of human occupation (MOHO) and a review of the literature

- The target audience is family caregivers of people with dementia who require assistance to safely complete activities of daily living.
- This program was created at the Juliette Fowler Communities senior living facility in Dallas, Texas.
- Each session targets a different component of caregiving.
- Each session was reviewed and edited based on feedback from the facility staff
- A modified, 3-session workshop, was presented to caregivers whose loved ones resided in the assisted living or memory care unit of the community

Program Focus:

Addresses the physical, emotional and social needs of informal caregivers who provide frequent assistance during daily tasks to loved ones

Program Goals:

1. Increase caregiver knowledge on the progression of dementia and typical changes
2. Practice and identify proper techniques and body positioning for safe assistance during transfers and community mobility
3. Identify effective communication techniques
4. Promote use of a routine and social supports for positive emotional health
5. Promote and practice of self-care within individual factors and needs

Topics covered:

1. Progression of Alzheimer's Disease and changes in functional status
2. Physical elements of caregiving
3. Communication strategies and navigation of the healthcare system
4. Management of emotional challenges and barriers
5. Role of self-care in health management

Interventions:

1. Education on the symptoms and progression of dementia and Alzheimer's Disease
2. Communication techniques for personal and professional settings
3. Creation of tools for time management and stress reduction
4. Knowledge check-ins through multiple designs (true/false, multiple choice, matching)
5. Education on available resources and social supports

Review Tools:

1. Meetings for review of each session with staff at the Juliette Fowler Communities facility
2. Feedback forms completed by staff members following review meetings
3. Feedback forms completed by informal caregivers after in-person session

Reference

Edwards, M. (2015). Family caregivers for people with dementia and the role of occupational therapy. *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Geriatrics*, 33(3), 220–232.
<https://doi.org/10.3109/02703181.2015.1031926>