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Ally Frazier

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, a.frazier3@usa.edu

Steven M. Gerardi

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, sgerardi@usa.edu

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Occupational Therapy for People With Dementia who Have Occupational Performance Challenges due to Depression

Ally Frazier, Steven M. Gerardi, PhD, OTD, MSS, OTR

BACKGROUND

- Depressive disorders are among the most common psychiatric diseases in elderly populations (James et al., 2018). Depression frequently co-occurs and can be linked to the onset of dementia in old age (Wu et al., 2020).
- Staff at Parkwood Meadows Assisted Living Facility (PMALF) reported an increase in depressive symptoms amongst residents after the pandemic, which presented as social isolation and withdrawal from active engagement in leisure interests (B. Hansell, personal communication, April 15, 2023).
- Occupational therapy (OT) at PMALF mostly addresses performance of basic ADLS.

PROBLEM

OT at PMALF does not provide services that fostered participation in active occupations to mitigate the effects of depression among clients with dementia.

PURPOSE

To develop an occupation-based OT program to treat people with dementia who had occupational performance challenges due to depression.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & COMPONENTS

General Program Goal:

Create an OT program based on the Behavioral Activation techniques, the Model of Human Occupation components and the Allen Cognitive Disabilities Model to improve active participation in leisure pursuits, to mitigate depression among residents with dementia.

Utilizing the program:

1. Obtain information using the 'Activating Engagement in Residents' fact sheet
2. Administer the Allen Cognitive Level Screen (ACLS) & record score
3. Formulate a hierarchy of sessions with a focus on alignment objectives informed client's Allen cognitive level
4. Start therapeutic activities



Framework:

Eight therapeutic activities were created to increase active occupational participation and performance among participants.

Model of Human Occupation:

Looks at supports and barriers to participation in the resident's environment, along with intrinsic factors such as their volition, habituation, and performance skills (Taylor, 2017). It is important to create an environment that encourages residents to participate and develop new habits, as well as consider the residents self-perceptions.

Behavioral Activation:

Participation in a hierarchy of client-identified valued occupations served as their own reward. Beginning with the least challenging valued occupations ensured success and encourage participation in the next activity in the hierarchy (Uphoff, et al., 2019).

Allen Cognitive Level Screen (ACLS):

The ACLS was used to determine the cognitive level and performance capacity of participants to deliver client-centered care within the clients' abilities (Kang & Tadi, 2023).



([Photograph of a large Allen Cognitive Screen Test]. 2024)

Therapeutic Activities:

Each of the following 8 therapeutic activities are broken down to fit the needs of residents scoring the ACL levels 3-5.

Building a Snowman Little Drummer Boy Candy Cane Balloon Mealtime Fun		Silly Skee Ball Daisey Dress up Farming Frenzy World Traveler
ACL: 3 Solitary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining action • Using and grasping all objects • Discriminating objects • Noting effects of objects 	ACL: 4 Parallel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequencing • Differentiating features • Completing goal • Personalizing • Memorizing techniques 	ACL: 5 Cooperative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning self to task • Discriminating between parts of an activity • Self-directed learning • Consulting with others

SCAN QR CODES

Program:



References:



This project did not involve human subjects and does not require IRB approval.

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