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May Rose Lazarte OTS; Karen Park, OTD, OTR/L; Becki Cohill, OTD, OTR/L; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

BACKGROUND

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported by the year 2050, about 26% of the population would be 60 years of age or older (CDC, 2020). Older adults, who are now in their later years in life, are prone to experience social isolation, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and social stressors (Valtorta et al., 2018). Therefore, without the appropriate resources and support, older adults may have fewer opportunities to transition to the Third Age lifestyle successfully. It can then be challenging for this population to participate in meaningful leisure and social activities to fulfill life satisfaction (Leland & Elliott, 2012). An occupational therapist (OT) is equipped with client-centered and evidence-based approaches, with emphasis and engagement of occupations, to analyze and design a senior center program that best fits older adults' needs of successful aging (Krupa et al., 2009).

PURPOSE

To evaluate the needs of well-elderly adults' leisure and social participation in order to improve successful aging and advocate for OTs role at a senior center.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Needs Assessment

- 73 Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center (LMPSC) members completed the Life Satisfaction Index of the Third Age-Short Form (LSITA-SF).
- 16 senior center and staff members completed a semi-structured interview.
- Current online classes and presentations were observed to evaluate the impact of leisure and social engagement for aging successfully

LSITA-SF Results	
Normal limits: 42.5 – 59.9 points	Average score obtained: 41.01 out of 72 points

4 Major Themes	Subthemes and examples
Impact from COVID-19 Restrictions	• Decreased Social Engagement • Classes Canceled and Not Transitioning to Online
Needs for Technology Training	• Decreased Understanding of How to Use Online Platforms and Devices • Limited Technology Literacy • Limited Resources Available
Needs of Organization Skills	• Scheduling Issues and Use of Calendar • Overwhelmed with Numerous E-Mails • Missing/Losing Zoom Invitations
Needs for Aging in Place	• Decreased Understanding of How to Adapt Tasks • Lack of Self-Care • Fear of Aging and Losing Independence

Dissemination

Themes from the needs assessment results were presented to the LMPSC staff and members via Adobe Spark Website in order to inform them of the current senior center experience. The following are recommendations/suggestions that were provided to increase leisure and social participation.

- Tips on how to combat COVID-19 effects to increase quality of life
- Steps on how to organize Zoom meeting invitations into folders using Gmail to access Zoom links easier
- Sample of Zoom housekeeping PowerPoint slides to increase participation using the Zoom features
- How to use the Share Screen feature on Zoom using an iPhone to increase participation and assist with maneuvering through their device
- Home safety and modification presentation to increase safety during Zoom exercise classes
- Pelvic floor information/exercise worksheet to increase leisure and social participation
- Virtual sample games to increase participation and encourage "togetherness"
- Suggested Microsoft Forms to conduct surveys and measure program outcomes in real-time

CONCLUSION

Humans are social beings and the friendships that are created through senior center facilities are the antidote to loneliness, helplessness, and boredom that many older adults may face as they age. The needs assessment results determined that older adults continue to require leisure and social participation to age successfully and have a positive outlook on life. The barriers discussed help shed light on the importance of understanding leisure and social participation to increase socialization, create friendships, and provide a sense of belonging through the activities performed together.

OT IMPLICATIONS

An OT has the potential to play a significant role in supporting senior center members' leisure and social participation as a consultant. An OT can help empower senior center members to become active members of society and find purpose in their daily life through:

- Adapting activities to become transitional from the senior center to the home and community setting in order to encourage leisure and social participation.
- Educating older adults on how to use technology to enhance engagement during LMPSC online classes.
- Evaluating services regularly to enhance the senior center experience.

REFERENCES

Please scan QR code for references