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BACKGROUND

Geriatric depression is a mental health illness that impacts thousands of people living in long-term healthcare facilities. Geriatric depression impacts every occupation, and among those social and leisure occupations of daily living are heavily affected. Occupational therapist treat geriatric depression, but when using group therapy, it is almost exclusively cognitive-behavioral therapy.

PROBLEM

Occupational therapists lack a group therapy treatment option that utilizes leisure activity and social participation to address geriatric depression.

PURPOSE

To develop a leisure activity and social participation based OT group therapy treatment to address geriatric depression.

Outcome objectives:

(a) To develop a program for group therapy with a focus on treating geriatric depression.
(b) To evaluate the effectiveness of the program in treating geriatric depression.
(c) To develop a proposal for the inclusion of this therapy when providing occupational therapy services to people with geriatric depression in long-term care facilities.

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METHODS

This program utilized the 7-step group therapy design. An assisted living facility was used to implement this group therapy program. Surveys and Geriatric Depression Scale Short form (GDS) were taken to evaluate program effectiveness.

- 8 total participants
- 8-week, 8 session program
- Each session was 1 hour long.

- **Program Design:** Leisure activity for each session was selected based on participant responses in survey. Two different leisure activities were presented each session, and the participants would vote on the activity to perform. This was designed to ensure intrinsic motivation towards the activity based on the MOHO model.

Activities Performed:
1. Dice games
2. Arts and crafts
3. Domino games
4. Sing along

- **GDS Assessments:** Given on week 1, week 4, and week 8 of the program.
- Determined participant eligibility and program effectiveness by determining levels of geriatric depression symptoms.

Surveys:
- Given on week 1, week 4, and week 8 of the program.
- Determined leisure interests, participant satisfaction, and needed adaptations to program or future developments.

Program

TREATMENT TEMPLATE COMPONENTS

General Program Goals:

1. Develop a group therapy program that focuses on leisure activity and social participation.
2. Decrease geriatric depression symptoms in participants.
3. Develop friendships between participants to increase impact and longevity of program.
4. Promote engagement in occupations and activities available within the facility the participants live in.
5. Promote social participation in daily life

Focus of Group Therapy:

Focus on engagement of participants in leisure activity. Emphasis placed on ensuring social participation through facilitation of conversations between all participants.

Theoretical Framework:

1. The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO)

Program Outcome Assessment Tools:

1. The Geriatric Depression Scale Short Form
2. Pre-program interviews with participants and assisted living facility staff
3. Pre, mid, and post program surveys
4. Observations of facility's current installed activities and level of participation by program participants.

Interventions:

1. Education on the danger and effects of geriatric depression symptoms
2. Education on importance of leisure activities and social participation in daily life.
3. Use of intrinsic motivation to encourage higher participation levels within activities.
4. Engagement in meaningful leisure activity and social participation to increase life satisfaction and quality of life, and to decrease geriatric depression symptoms.

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