

University of Northern Iowa

UNI ScholarWorks

INSPIRE Student Research and Engagement
Conference

2024 INSPIRE Student Research and
Engagement Conference

Apr 8th, 10:00 AM - 10:50 AM

Empathy, Education, & Empowerment: Reflections on the World of Dementia

Sarah Stegge

University of Northern Iowa

Jordan Neely

University of Northern Iowa

See next page for additional authors

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©2024 Sarah Stegge, Jordan Neely, Samantha Heyer, and Elaine M. Eshbaugh

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/csbsresearchconf>

Recommended Citation

Stegge, Sarah; Neely, Jordan; Heyer, Samantha; and Eshbaugh, Elaine M., "Empathy, Education, & Empowerment: Reflections on the World of Dementia" (2024). *INSPIRE Student Research and Engagement Conference*. 9.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/csbsresearchconf/2024/all/9>

This Open Access Poster Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the CSBS Conferences/Events at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in INSPIRE Student Research and Engagement Conference by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

Author

Sarah Stegge, Jordan Neely, Samantha Heyer, and Elaine M. Eshbaugh

Empathy, Education, & Empowerment: Reflections on the World of Dementia



Jordan Neely, Sarah Stegge, Samantha Heyer, & Elaine M. Eshbaugh, PhD
University of Northern Iowa

INTRODUCTION

At UNI's Dementia Simulation House, we offer the opportunity for participants to experience what life may be like for someone living with dementia in a home setting. About 80% of individuals living with dementia live at home in the community, and we aim to show participants what it might be like for these individuals to complete chores and activities of daily living. An individual puts on gear to experience dementia. There is a debriefing that involves writing a reaction word. We sorted the reaction words and calculated percentages on the commonality of phrases or words to examine the reactions of participants at the Dementia Simulation House. Common reaction words included anxious, difficult, humbling, trapped, and inadequate. These reactions give us insight into how participants respond to their experience and how it differs from their expectations.

METHOD

Participants:

- 37% of participants were college students, 26% were family care partners, 15% were professional care partners, and 30% were individuals who do not identify as students or caregivers.

Procedure:

- Participants go through the simulation with gear that alters three out of five senses that are impacted by dementia..
- While wearing the gear, participants are asked to complete four everyday household tasks as someone "living with dementia".
- After the simulation is completed, we ask participants to write one word or a phrase to describe how they felt during the simulation on a wooden brain.
- 1403 words/phrases were analyzed for this study.

DISCUSSION

This research suggests that the Dementia Simulation House is effective in increasing **empathy** of those living with dementia. It's important to track these reaction words/phrases to understand how individuals perceive the simulation and are then **educated** and **empowered** to take further steps of action in the community including:

- Being more patient in public spaces like the grocery store;
- Promoting dementia-friendly design;
- Connecting, not correcting; &
- Approaching individuals in a dementia-friendly way.

TAKEAWAY

- **EMPATHY**—the simulation increases empathy for those living with dementia.
- **EDUCATION**—we educate participants on symptoms of dementia and communication strategies.
- **EMPOWER**—we empower participants to make a positive change to help people with dementia continue to lead meaningful lives.

RESULTS

Figure 1: Word Cloud



Figures 5, 6, & 7:



Figures 2 & 3:

Top 10 Most Interesting Words



Used more than 10% of the time

Confusing

Used more than 5% of the time

Frustrating

Overwhelmed

Used more than 1% of the time

Eye-opening Anxious Stressed Difficult Disorienting

