Using a Book Chat to Improve Attitudes and Perceptions of LTC Staff About Dementia

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Background

- Considering the high rates of residents with dementia in long-term care (LTC), research is needed to explore creative training approaches to enhance staff’s knowledge about and attitudes toward dementia in order to provide high quality care and to ensure a good work experience.
- A book club may be useful for staff who care for individuals with dementia as it provides the structure to finish the book and allows participants to have a conversation that aims to enhance knowledge and attitudes about dementia care (Arends, Frick, Smith & Treinkman, 2007).

Objective: To evaluate a book chat intervention based on Lisa Genova’s novel Still Alice in order to build empathy and understanding in LTC staff when caring for people with dementia.

Methods

STUDY DESIGN

- Posttest-only with a comparison group
- Both groups completed a survey which included the Approaches to Dementia Questionnaire (ADQ; Lintern et al., 2001) and open-ended questions
- Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 20) and qualitative data using thematic content analysis

SAMPLE

- Book chat participants: 4 PSWs, 1RPN, 1 RN, 1 Administrator, 1 Life Enrichment, 1 Social Worker, 2 Others
- Control group: 3 PSWs, 1 RN, 2 Administrators, 1 Life Enrichment, 1 Support Services, 2 Others
- All of the book chat participants were female compared to 80% in the control group
- 64% of participants and 60% of controls were over the age of 46
- 82% of participants and 80% of controls had specialized training in dementia

Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>ADQ Scores</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Comparison Group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>t</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hope subscale</td>
<td>31.6 (3.34)</td>
<td>26.5 (8.42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Person-centered subscale</td>
<td>51.7 (2.67)</td>
<td>46.4 (5.56)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total score</td>
<td>82.67 (3.67)</td>
<td>72.9 (12.53)</td>
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- *p* < 0.05
- Note: Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes

Participant Quotes

**GREATER INSIGHT INTO THE EMOTIONAL JOURNEY OF DEMENTIA**

“I have a better idea of how the person with dementia is feeling. How frustrated the person must feel.”—PSW

**PERCEPTION OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

“I have learned to be less judgmental of the family situation.”—PSW

**IMPACT ON PRACTICE**

“More insight into the mind and knowledge of the fears has helped me in my practice.”—RN

“I learned slower is faster with people with dementia.”—PSW

**VALUE OF PERSONHOOD**

“I try hard to get to know the person, not the dementia. It has made me look at the family and life before.”—PSW

Conclusions

- A book chat creates an environment to discuss, learn and share experiences.
- Holding a book chat is a creative approach to allow staff the opportunity to reflect on the care given to residents with dementia.
- By creating innovative learning opportunities, knowledge about dementia care may greatly benefit staff, family, and residents.

References

