

Enhancing Engagement in Meaningful Occupations for Older Adults with Dementia/Cognitive Impairment

Jocelyn Spitz, OTDS

Huntington University Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program

Project Description & Site

The purpose of this capstone project is to enhance engagement of older adults with dementia residing at The Chateau at Moorings Park, in meaningful occupations. Without something meaningful to do, behaviors such as agitation, irritability, wandering, self-stimulation, yelling, and aggressiveness appear (Robichaud, Hébert, & Desrosiers, 1993). The goal is to initiate and implement individualized programs addressing the needs of each resident in a holistic manner. These programs would aim to decrease maladaptive behaviors, and increase participation in occupations, such as ADL's, leisure, rest/sleep, and social participation.

Site: The Chateau at Moorings Park, Naples, FL

Mission & Vision Statements

Vision Statement: To provide older adults residing in a memory care facility with strengths-based, person-centered, individualized programming that promote purpose and empowerment to increase engagement in meaningful occupations.

Mission Statement: To enhance engagement for older adults with dementia or cognitive impairment residing in a memory care facility in meaningful occupations to promote self-worth and quality of life.



Needs Assessment | Literature Review

Literature Review:

- Many studies have found that residents of such facilities spend the majority of the day engaging in nothing at all with unstructured time accounting for two-thirds of the day (Cohen-Mansfield, Thein, Dakheel-Ali, & Marx, 2010)
- Many times older adults who live in a locked, or secure, unit reported feeling confined, feelings of captivity, lack of dignity, and sense of injustice
- "For individuals diagnosed with dementia, occupational performance has the potential to maintain identity, provide a sense of usefulness and enjoyment... and provide respite from anxiety" (Egan, Hobson, & Fearing, 2006)

Needs Assessment:

- Data collection for needs assessment consisted of one-on-one interviews and observation.
- Implications for my project were: (a) occupational profiles are needed to paint a full picture of resident for all staff; (b) educational resources about cognitive leveling is needed to form activities; and (c) individualized-strengths-based activities without a clear goal promote empowerment and purpose when engaging in occupations.

Project Completion and Outcomes

- **Outcome #1:** Student will develop an advanced skillset and knowledge base identifying maladaptive behaviors and making clinical recommendations when working with older adults with dementia/cognitive impairments.
- **Outcome #2:** Student will understand person-centered care and how to individualize programming in a memory care facility to promote optimal occupational engagement.
- **Achieved by:** observation, conducting a needs assessment, treatment hours, continuing education courses, attending lectures, creating educational resources, implementing individualized programming, Opening Minds through Art (OMA) participation and research, It's Never 2 Late (iN2L), and conversing with staff.

Deliverables

- Needs Assessment Summary
- Resource Binder for Activities Department Staff
- Signed documentation of ~50 treatment hours with an OTR/L
- Summary of three individualized programs implemented at The Chateau at Moorings Park

Future Implications for OT

- Create an assessment tool to determine if individualized programming increases occupational engagement, while decreasing maladaptive behaviors
- Implement a study of residents participating in research based programs, such as OMA and iN2L versus residents who do not. Compare the amount of maladaptive behaviors present in the two groups
- Advocacy in memory care facilities on the value occupational therapists' add to the lives of older adults with cognitive impairment/dementia regarding occupation participation and quality of life



KEY REFERENCES

- Cohen-Mansfield, J., Thein, K., Dakheel-Ali, M., & Marx, M. S. (2010). Engaging nursing home residents with dementia in activities: The effects of modeling, presentation order, time of day, and setting characteristics. *Aging Mental Health, 14*(4), 471-480. doi: 10.1080/13607860903586102
- Egan, M., Hobson, S., & Fearing, V. G. (2006). Dementia and occupation: A review of the literature. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 73*(3), 132-140. doi: 10.2182/cjot.05.0015
- Robichaud, L., Hébert, R., & Desrosiers, J. (1993). Efficacy of a sensory integration program on behaviors of inpatients with dementia. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 48*(4), 355-360.

*Full reference list and image reference list available upon request