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Katie Holmes  
*A. T. Still University*

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# Resiliency and Proactive Coping Methods Targeting Perceived Stress Levels in Older Adults

*Katheryn Holmes, OTS*

*Advisor: Aaron Bonsall, PhD, OTR/L, Community Mentor: Jessica Meyer, MEd, MS, OTR/L, Director of Success Matters*

**Doctorate of Occupational Therapy Program, A. T. Still University, Mesa, AZ**

## Introduction

- Resiliency: the ability to adapt during crisis or challenges and achieve positive outcomes (McEwen, 2016).
- Proactive coping: the ability for an individual to view stressful events or demands as challenges instead of the term stressor (Greenglass et al., 2006; Katter & Greenglass, 2013).
- Research question:** To what extent is a pilot stress management program that focuses on concepts of resiliency and proactive coping for older adults in a retirement community effective and sustainable?
- Approved by A.T. Still University's IRB as a non-jurisdictional program evaluation.

## Community Site

- The Beatitudes Campus combines senior living, healthcare, and a holistic approach to health and well-being.
- Offers a continuum of care and options for living: independent living, assisted living, long-term care, rehab & skilled nursing, and memory care.

## Methods

- Participants:**
  - Eligibility criteria for the program included: residents at the Beatitudes Campus, voluntary participation.
  - Typical session had ~5-8 residents in attendance
  - On average, residents attended 4 of the 8 sessions (50%)
  - 5 residents (45%) completed both pre-test and post-test
- Data Collection and Analysis:**
  - The Coping Strategies Post-Test Survey (CSPTS).
  - The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to evaluate if perceived stress scores decreased post-stress management program implementation (Cohen et al., 1983).
  - Descriptive statistics using Excel spreadsheet

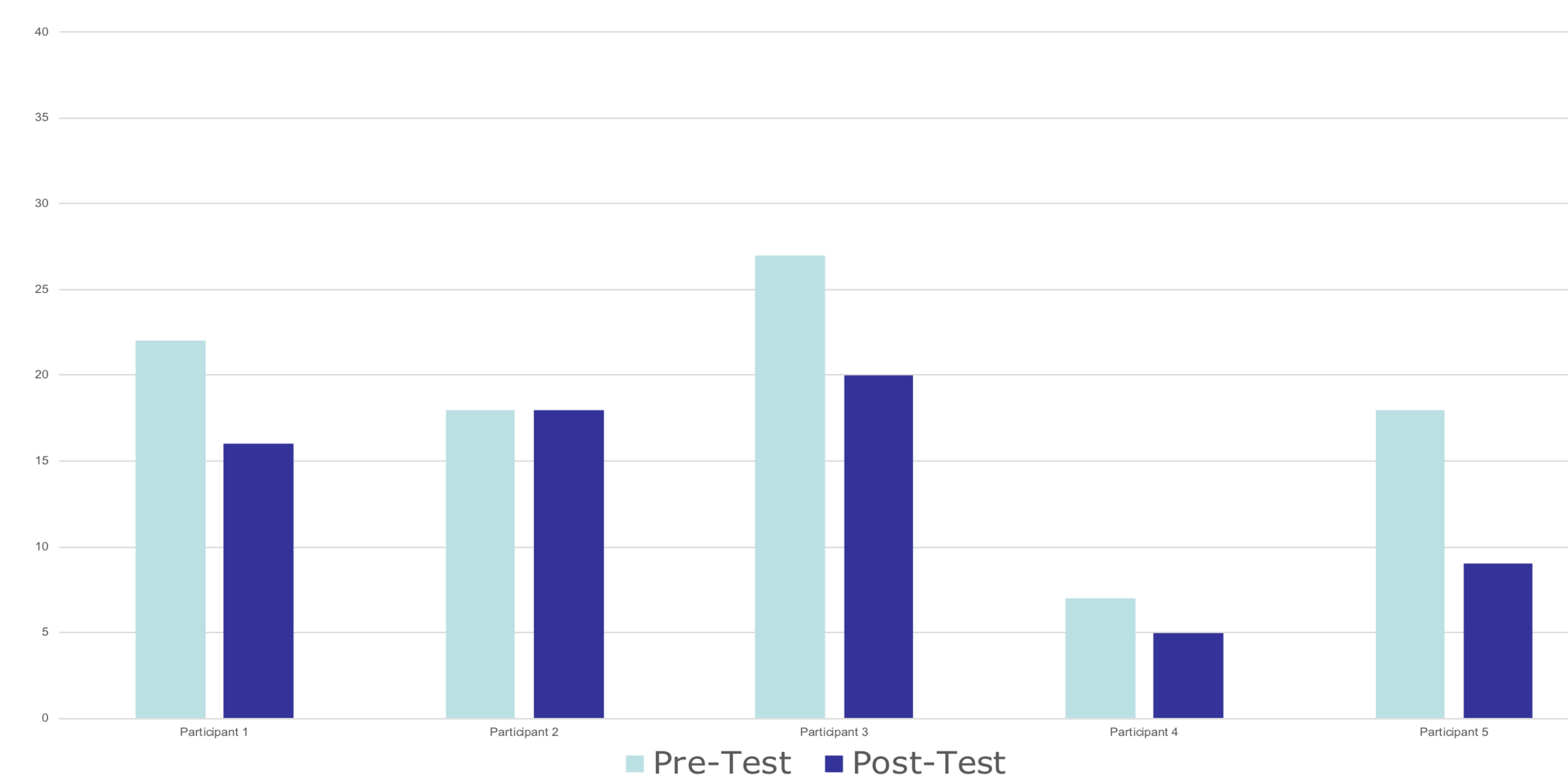
## Results

Table 1. Program Description

Weekly Sessions	Topic/Theme	Activities
Session 1	Introductions & The Basics	Negative VS. Good Stress; Cultivate Positive Thinking
Session 2	Resilience Building & Positive Affirmations	Kawa River Model; Case Studies on Resiliency
Session 3	The Relaxation Response	I Am, I Can, I Have; HeartMath Institute; Body Scan; Relaxation Response
Session 4	Finding Your Stories Silver Lining	"What Stuck With You?"; Finding Silver Linings; The Moth Podcast
Session 5	Healthy Lifestyle Choices	Leisure & Volunteer Exploration; Sleep Routines; Journaling; Mindful Eating
Session 6	Physical Activity & Goal Setting	Goal Setting & Creating an Exercise Plan; Yoga & Strength/Balance Exercises
Session 7	Mindfulness, Meditation, and Guided Imagery	Draw Your Happy Place; Audio Clips; Goal Visualization Activity
Session 8	Sensory Experiences	Aromatherapy; Healthy Trail Mix; Making a Stress Ball

- A manualized intervention was created, revised, and completed by the end of the 16-week experience. See Table 1.
- 4 of 5 residents accurately identified 3 coping strategies post-implementation (CSPTS).
- 4 out of 5 residents decreased their total score at the conclusion of the workshop. An overall 12% decrease in total scores was demonstrated in perceived stress levels on the PSS by the end of the 8-week program. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Perceived Stress Levels (PSS)



## Conclusion

- Program successfully used concepts to reduce stress suggested by the literature: providing leisure support, volunteerism and engaging in occupation, and social support and physical activity (Chang, 2016; Chippendale & Boltz, 2015; Kao & Chang, 2017; Kwag et al., 2011).
- The results and implementation of the pilot program suggest it is feasible for occupational therapy practitioners to deliver a similar program and target stress levels by educating and providing appropriate, healthy coping mechanisms to community-dwelling older adults.
- This project emphasized the ability of occupational therapists to address stress management and appropriate coping techniques to serve as a way to educate older individuals in healthy practices that impact mental health and well-being (Chippendale & Boltz, 2015).
- Limitations include small number of participants, inconsistent attendance, assessment administration and completion, no exclusion criteria
- Further research should examine effectiveness of combining group interventions with additional individualized interventions.

## References

- See reference list.

## Acknowledgments



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