

A.T. Still University

Still ScholarWorks

OT Student Capstones

Occupational Therapy Department

2022

Developing a Resource for Optimizing Occupational Engagement in Adults with Dementia

Maria Del Carmen Rosas Ojeda
A. T. Still University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.atsu.edu/ot-capstones>



Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rosas Ojeda, Maria Del Carmen, "Developing a Resource for Optimizing Occupational Engagement in Adults with Dementia" (2022). *OT Student Capstones*. 12.
<https://scholarworks.atsu.edu/ot-capstones/12>

This Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the Occupational Therapy Department at Still ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in OT Student Capstones by an authorized administrator of Still ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact mohammadaslam@atsu.edu.

Developing a Resource for Optimizing Occupational Engagement in Adults with Dementia

Maria Del Carmen Rosas Ojeda, OTDS

Faculty Advisor: Bernard Muriithi, PhD, OTR/L

Community Mentor: Tara Krantzman

A.T. Still University, Mesa, AZ



Introduction

- Dementia is an umbrella term for cognitive impairments in memory, language, and executive function. It is a progressive disease that affects an individual's ability to perform their daily occupations.
- Functional decline may result in increased health care costs, impaired quality of life, being institutionalized, and death.¹³
- Most individuals with dementia live at home or within the community and care is typically provided by family or friends.
- Caregivers experience caregiver burden due to the physical, mental, and emotional demand placed on them; in turn, they can no longer continue caring for their loved one.^{6, 19, 26, 32}
- Caregivers lack the support they need within the community; they may be unaware of the importance of promoting engagement in activities or how to facilitate engagement.
- Occupational therapists can help provide education and training during daily activities to facilitate occupational engagement, promote independence, and mitigate caregiver burden.
- This highlights the need for more educational resources to help support caregivers to promote positive outcomes.

Purpose

Develop a caregiver resource/guide (A Caregiver's Guide to Helping People with Dementia Participate in Everyday Activities) to provide caregivers and community members with specific evidence-based recommendations and strategies for optimizing occupational engagement in adults with dementia.

Caregiver Resource Development

- Conducted a needs assessment at Oakwood Creative Care (OCC) by incorporating structured observation, participant observation, and caregiver and staff member interviews to identify the needs of OCC members
- Data from observations and interviews was supported by dementia literature
- Qualitative data was analyzed, and common themes were identified
- Triangulation of data revealed the barriers that limited activity engagement
- Prominent occupations and activities were incorporated in the caregiver resource and client-centered and evidence-based solutions were provided (environmental modifications, task simplification, addressing communication)
- Caregiver guide was translated in Spanish

Participants

Staff member interviews (Engagement Specialists) (N=4)

- Women (N=3) Man (N=1)

Caregiver interviews (N=3)

- Women (N=3)
- Daughter (N=3)
- Live with individual with dementia (N=2)

Observations

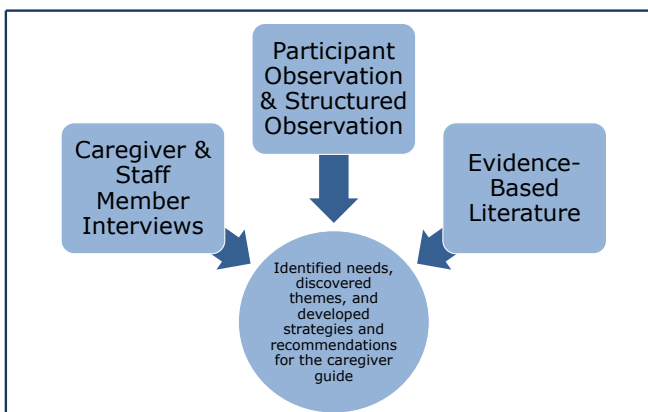
- OCC members with dementia

Program Objectives

- I. Conduct a needs assessment to determine specific needs
- II. Identify barriers that limit activity engagement
- III. Provide recommendations for optimizing occupational engagement



Program Outcomes



Challenges & Barriers

- Initiation
- Sequencing
- Following commands
- Frequent prompting to participate
- Decreased engagement with passive activities
- Lack of socialization
- Impaired hearing, sight, or language barrier
- Communication

Occupations & Activities

- The following activities were incorporated into the caregiver support guide:
- Bathing
 - Toileting
 - Dressing
 - Grooming & Hygiene
 - Socialization/Social Participation
 - Gardening
 - Art

Recommendations & Strategies

- Environmental Modification
 - Tripping hazards; grab bars; raised toilet seat; shower chair
- Task Simplification
 - Simple fasteners for clothing; organizing/labeling closet/drawers; limiting choices
- Modifying Communication
 - Increased non-verbal communication; simple language; one to two step directions

Discussion

- Prominent themes were supported by previous literature
- The needs assessment allowed client-centered recommendations and strategies to be incorporated in the final caregiver guide
- Caregiver guide addressed need of caregivers lacking resources and support for caring for individuals with dementia
- Project produced a sustainable guide that can be used by current and future caregivers long-term
- Translating the guide in Spanish helped address the health literacy needs of Spanish-speaking individuals

Limitations

- Low number of caregiver interviews
- Decreased structured observation opportunities

Implications for Occupational Therapy

- OT needed in dementia care
- OTs have the expertise to help support caregivers by providing training and educational resources to help optimize occupational engagement
- OTs can provide specific strategies to promote engagement and independence
- OT promotes a holistic approach to care and regards it important to address areas such as social participation and leisure activities instead of solely focusing on ADLs

Future Considerations

- Determine the effectiveness of the caregiver guide
- Conduct surveys or interviews to assess if the recommendations were helpful
- Caregivers should be inquired about caregiver stress and burden, ADL performance of their loved one, or if they were able to keep their loved one at home for a greater duration

Conclusion

- Triangulation of data revealed the barriers that limited occupational engagement in OCC members, and the final themes of bathing, toileting, dressing, grooming and hygiene, gardening, art, and social participation were established
- The themes identified add to the existing literature that caregivers have difficulty caring for their loved ones and desire more support
- Necessary to incorporate OT in dementia care as cases continue to rise
- To diminish caregiver burden; promote independence and quality of life; and avoid long-term care placement, caregivers need appropriate resources and support to facilitate occupational engagement. The caregiver's guide helped address this need.

References

See Citation List