Life Review and Reminiscence with Older Adults in Detroit

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BACKGROUND

- Older adults (over the age of 65) are at an increased risk for experiencing loneliness if they are older in age, live alone or in residential care, are widowed, have a low income, and low education level.  
- Older adults in Detroit:
  - 13% are over 65
  - 50% live alone
  - 30% are widowed
  - 20% are experiencing poverty
  - 25% did not finish high school
- Prevalence of social isolation, loneliness and depression
  - 17% of older adults are socially isolated
  - 26% are at risk of death due to feelings of loneliness
  - About 5% of older adults who live independently in communities are experiencing major depression  
- There is a link between loneliness and depressive symptoms, leading to a reduction in physical and mental health for older adults

The purpose of this research is to explore the therapeutic benefits of a life review and reminiscence intervention for older adults living in subsidized, congregate, senior housing in Detroit.

METHODS

- Life Review and Reminiscence Intervention
  - 11-week discussion groups
  - Discussions facilitated based on various life themes using specific questions from a Guided Autobiography intervention (See Intervention section)
- Participants (N=14)
  - Recruited through self-selection and snowball sampling with a flyer
  - Participants were given an information sheet to obtain consent before participating
  - Pre and Post Scales
    - Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-SF)
    - Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6)
    - Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)
  - Open-ended questions were also asked at the end of the intervention

INTRODUCTION

Week     Activity/Themes
1       Get acquainted, pre-assessments
2       Theme 1: The major branching points in your life
3       Theme 2: The history of your family
4       Theme 3: The role of money in your life
5       Theme 4: The history of your major life work or career
6       Theme 5: The history of your health and body
7       Theme 6: The history of your gender identity
8       Theme 7: The history of your ideas/experiences with death
9       Theme 8: The history of your spiritual identity
10      Theme 9: The history of your goals and aspirations
11      Celebration, reflections, post-assessments

RESULTS

Social Networks

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Depression

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Satisfaction with Life

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CONCLUSION

- This study suggests that the intervention - life review and reminiscence involving in the intervention is beneficial by comparing a group who is not involved in the intervention
- Having a control group involved in future studies can help determine if any changes in symptoms of depression, loneliness, social isolation, and life satisfaction might be difficult to see in only 11-weeks

- Limitations
  - The issue of self-selection
  - Participants in this study were not initially depressed, socially isolated, lonely, or dissatisfied with their lives
  - Changes in symptoms of depression, loneliness, social isolation, and life satisfaction might be difficult to see in only 11-weeks
  - No control group involved
  - Future studies
    - Should look into the themes found in this study to understand their importance and benefit on conflict resolutions with self, life and others
    - Should look into the themes found in this study to understand how they further relate to the life review and reminiscence intervention
  - Should assess depression, loneliness, social isolation, and life satisfaction variables as a part of recruitment to ensure the participants in need are being reached
  - Keep in mind the impact that the intervention might make beyond the 11-weeks
    - Participants should be asked if they continue to reflect on their own or if the group has created a sense of community/broadened social networks
    - Having a control group involved in future studies can help determine if the intervention is beneficial by comparing a group who is not involved in the intervention