

# Caring for the Caregiver: An OT-Based Approach in Caring for Persons with Alzheimer's and other Dementias



Christina Ramirez, OTD/S



## About Alzheimer's Los Angeles

- Tax-exempt nonprofit organization serving caregivers and persons in all stages of Alzheimer's and Dementia
- Funding is acquired through government grants, individual contributions, fundraisers, and corporate funds
- Services include caregiver training, workshops, professional training, and helplines

## Mission

"Improving the lives of the local families affected by Alzheimer's and dementia by increasing awareness delivering effective programs and services, providing compassionate support, and advocating for quality care and a cure."

## Agency Needs

- Gap in culturally relevant materials/programs
- Lacking occupational therapy-based caregiver education
- Caregiver wellness

## Literature Review

- **25 million people are affected by dementia** in both developed and developing nations (Qiu, Kivipelto, & von Strauss, 2009)
- Increased **preparedness** and **understanding** about Alzheimer's disease will **improve coping** for caregivers as the disease progresses (Seike et al., 2014)
- The leading homecare safety problem is **inadequate education** for familial and professional carers (Tudor et. al., 2017)
- Lack of training and skills in Alzheimer's care can lead to **caregiver stress, physical injury, and caregiver burnout** (Tudor et. al., 2017)
- **Mindfulness** has been known to show improvements in stress, burden and quality of life (QOL) (Qiu, Kivipelto, & von Strauss, 2009)
- The **Person-Environment-Occupation Model (PEO)** can help in understanding dementia and developing creative approaches which can help improve a persons QOL (Leland & Wang, 2018)

## Student Learning Objectives

**Learning objective 1:** Create and facilitate caregiver workshops to prepare caregivers in their role of caring for persons with Alzheimer's and other related dementias from an OT perspective

**Learning objective 2:** Analyze current programs for cultural relevance

**Learning objective 3:** Analyze the effect of providing caregiver education through workshops and in-home consultations on caregiver burden and preparedness

## Purpose

- Provide education to those who care for persons with Alzheimer's and other dementias through caregiver workshops and in-home consultations
- Provide professional training to caregivers
- Optimize home safety through in-home consultations
- Provide caregivers with strategies they can use in their daily life

## Description of Project

"Caring for the Caregiver" is a program designed to prepare caregivers in their role of caring for persons with Alzheimer's and other dementias

### Caregiver Workshops:

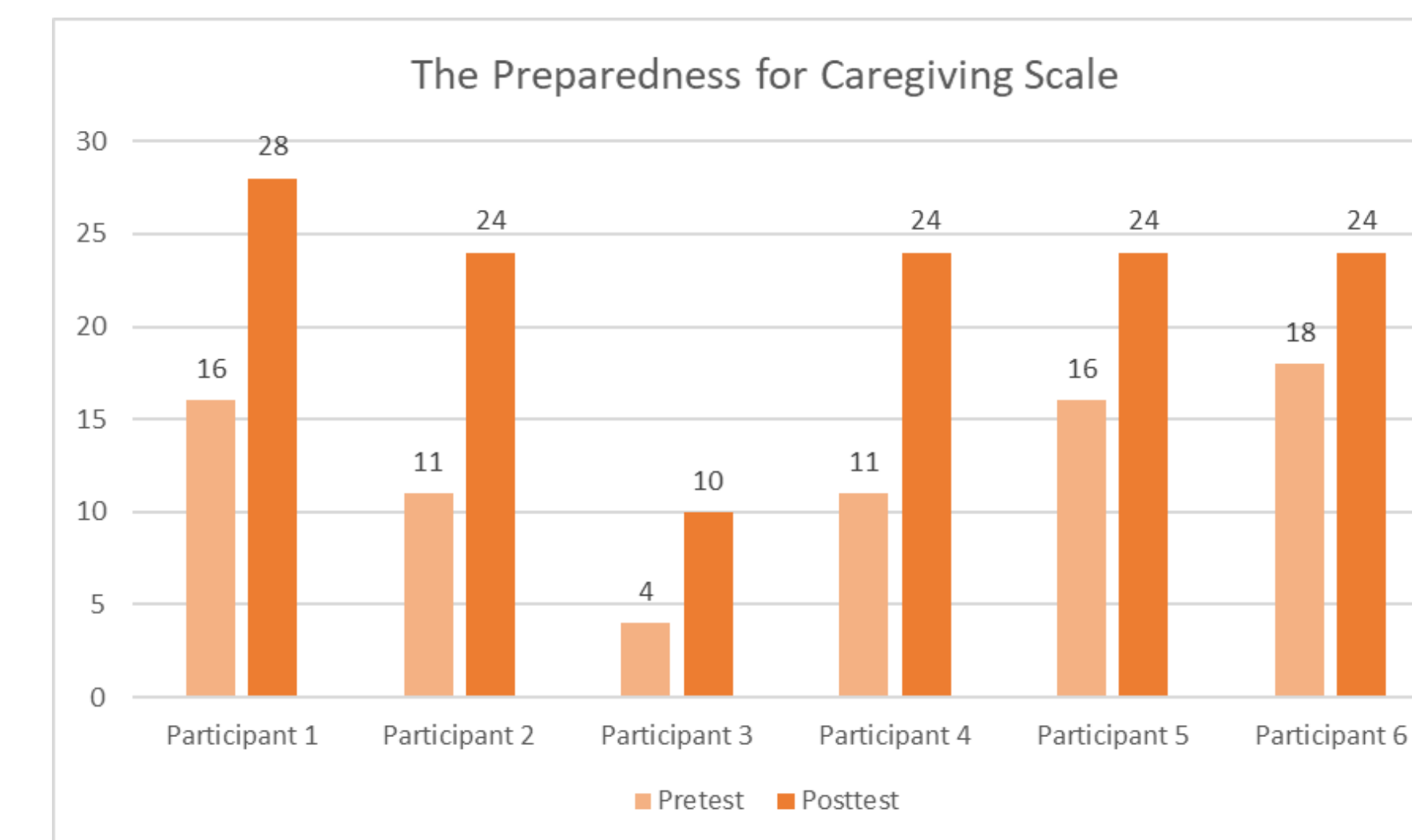
- Monthly caregiver workshops in Spanish and English
- Hosted on Tuesdays, 10am-12pm at Alzheimer's Los Angeles-East LA

### In-home Consultations:

- Short screening completed over the phone prior to consultation
- Two-hour long consultations were completed with faculty mentor present
- Provided caregivers with home safety recommendations and linkage to local resources
- Provided caregivers with wellness strategies to use in their daily life

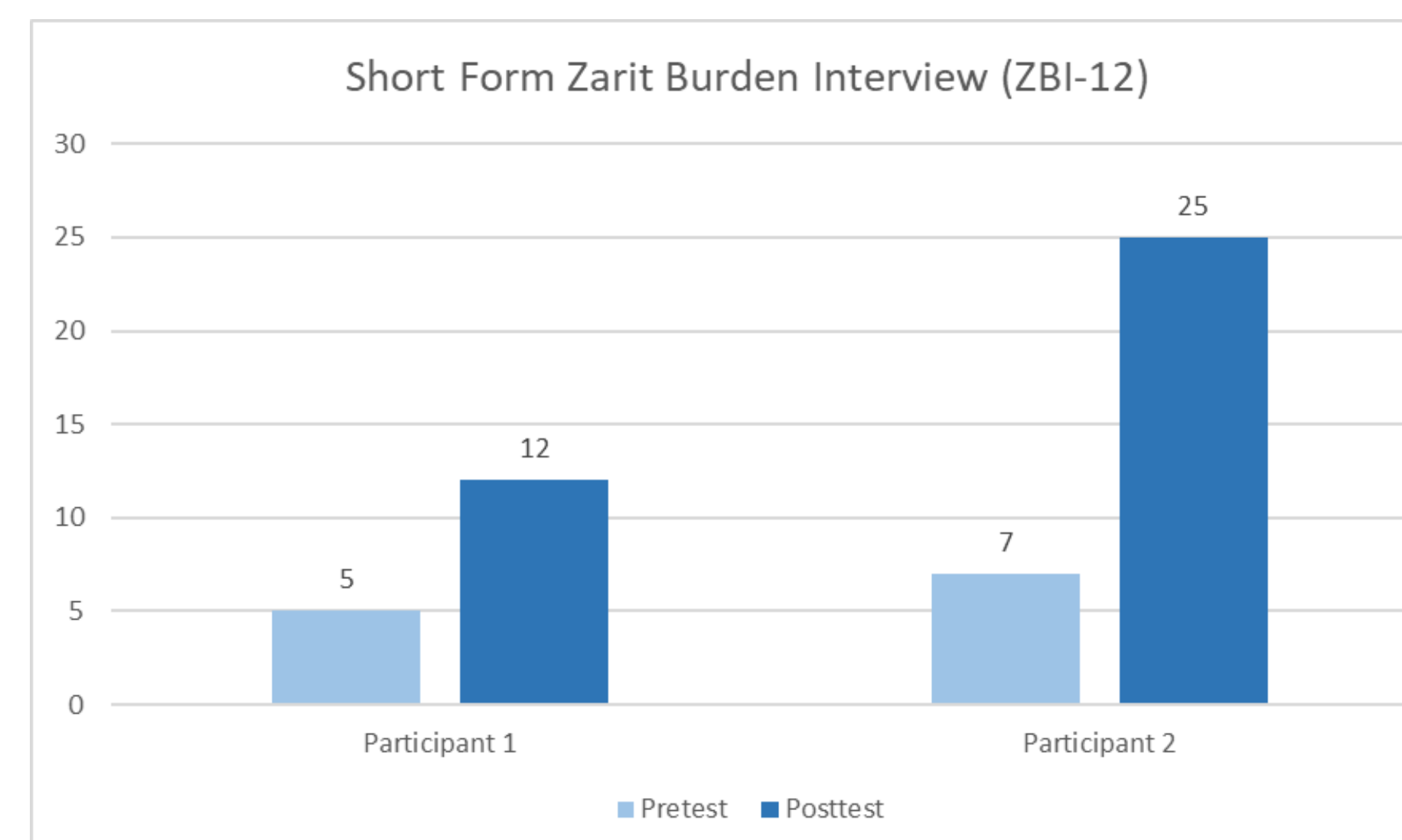
## Project Outcomes

### Caregiver Workshops:



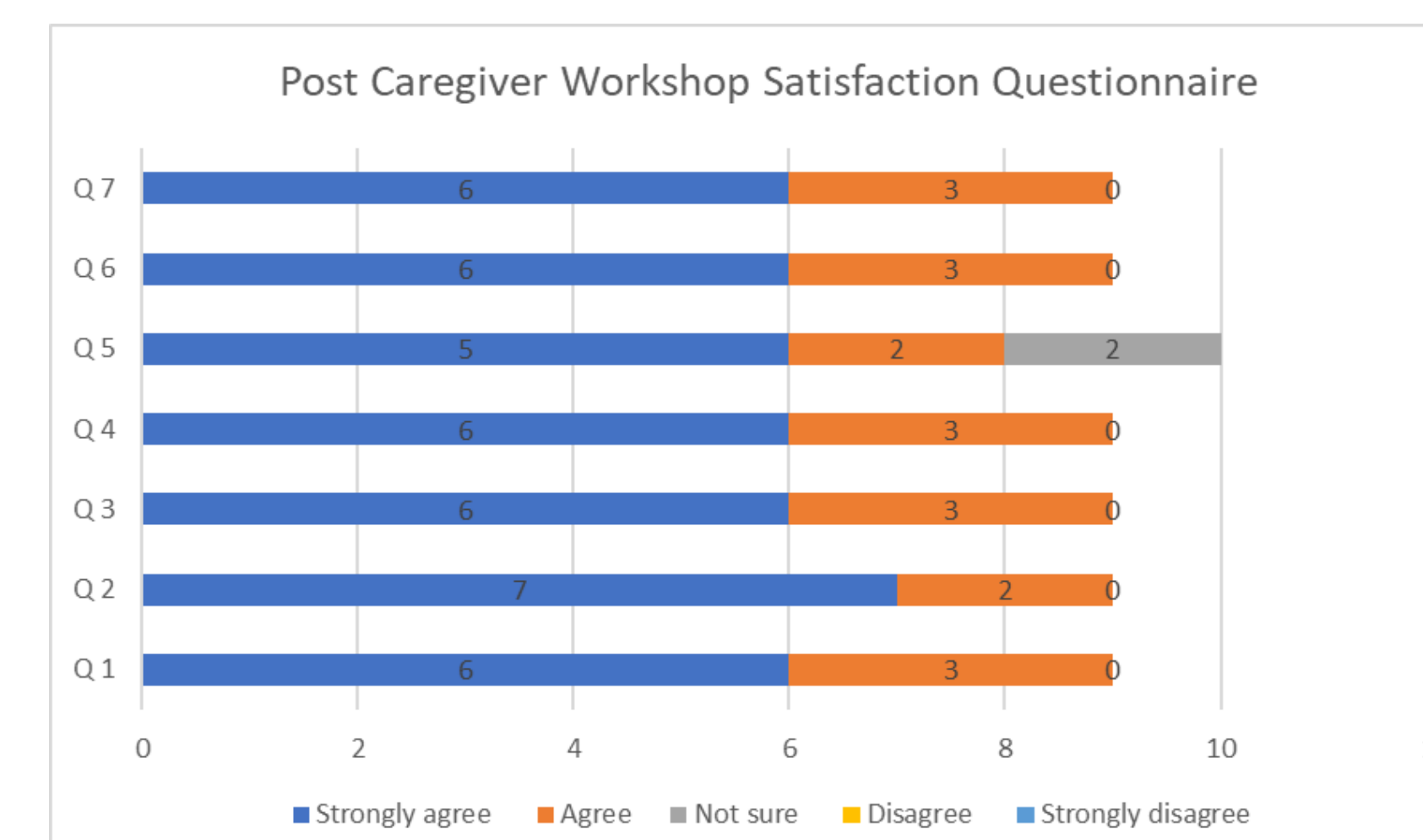
Results demonstrated an increase in caregiver preparedness after attending caregiver workshops.

### In-home consultations:



Results from the ZBI-12 demonstrate an increase in caregiver burden after receiving an in-home consultation.

### Satisfaction Questionnaire:



66% of caregivers strongly agreed that they were satisfied with caregiver workshops.

## Scholarly Deliverables

- Caregiver workshop PowerPoints in Spanish and English
- Satisfaction questionnaires
- In-home checklist
- Data results from the program

## Limitations

- Limited time for recruitment
- Small sample size
- Lack of previous studies in caregiver specific interventions
- Lack of reliable data
- Some language barriers during program delivery

## Implications for the Profession

- Research to support an occupational therapy-based approach in caring for persons with Alzheimers
- Provided research on caregiver burnout and preparedness
- Advocated for the role of OT in Alzheimer's care and caregiver education

## Ideas for Future Directions

- Continue caregiver workshops and in-home consultations at Alzheimer's LA
- Continue research to support occupational therapy-based caregiver programs
- Provide OT services through telehealth
- Create activities of daily living (ADL) handouts and videos as a resource to caregivers and staff

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my community site mentors Cathy Ladd and Anne Oh for allowing me to complete my capstone project at Alzheimer's Los Angeles. I would especially like to thank my faculty mentor Dr. Thomas, who provided me with feedback and guidance every step of the way. A special thank you to Dr. Friberg for making this capstone experience possible. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family for supporting me through this journey.