



The Impact of an Occupations-based Group Gardening Program on QOL for Individuals with Dementia

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NDR Therapeutic Riding

- 501©(3) Non-Profit Organization in Norco, CA.
- Provides equine-assisted activities for persons with disabilities/limitations ages 4 and up
- **Mission:** to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs (NDR, 2023).
- NDR Therapy Services: General practice OT clinic housed in a ranch setting and may include equines as an intervention tool within a customized treatment program.



Identified Needs

1. Development of a pilot program using the gardens at NDR.
2. Business/marketing plan strategies for NDR Therapy Services.
3. Resources for client and family education

Literature Review

- Researchers found that participation in the gardening group was viewed positively as a tool for dealing with life and **providing purpose and meaning** (Joyce & Warren, 2016).
- Compared to traditional structured activities, gardening has also been shown to **enhance social interaction**, and improve mood, the ability to reminisce, and quality of life in individuals with dementia (Smith-Carrier et al., 2021).
- Gardening can increase health and wellbeing through its capacity to support belonging and inclusion in that it **fosters opportunities for interpersonal connections** (Wagenfeld & Atchison, 2014).
- For those with low occupational engagement, the gardening group was seen to provide a productive role that **promoted a sense of satisfaction and achievement** (Joyce & Warren, 2016).

Learning Objectives

1. Develop and implement an occupation-based gardening program to improve quality of life for individuals with mild-mod dementia.
2. Plan for and obtain funding for a new occupation-based gardening program.
3. Improve clinical practice skills with individuals with special needs.

Program Description

Gardens in The Moment

- A five-week occupations-based gardening activities program for individuals with mild to moderate dementia.
- Purpose: to improve quality of life for individuals with dementia through therapeutic group gardening and garden-based activities in a ranch setting.
- Duration: one-hour sessions twice a week for five weeks



Program Goals

1. Increase social interactions
2. Increase participation in and opportunities for recreation/leisure activities
3. Increase physical activity
4. Improve self-esteem
5. Increase participation in meaningful activities



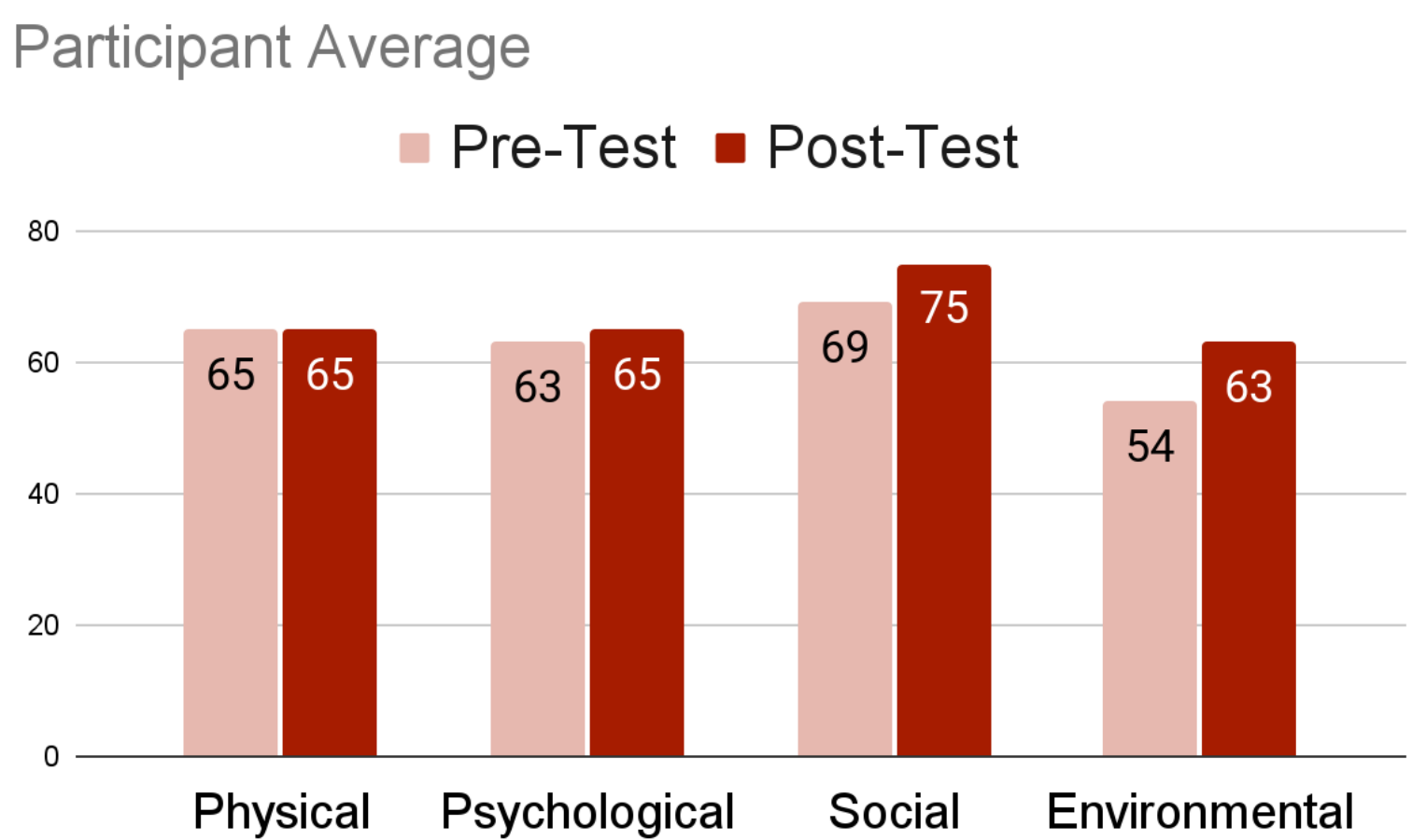
Activities

- Making herb butter
- Painting pots
- Planting seeds
- Harvesting vegetables
- Garden walks
- Arts and crafts
- Meal prep
- Snack time with horses

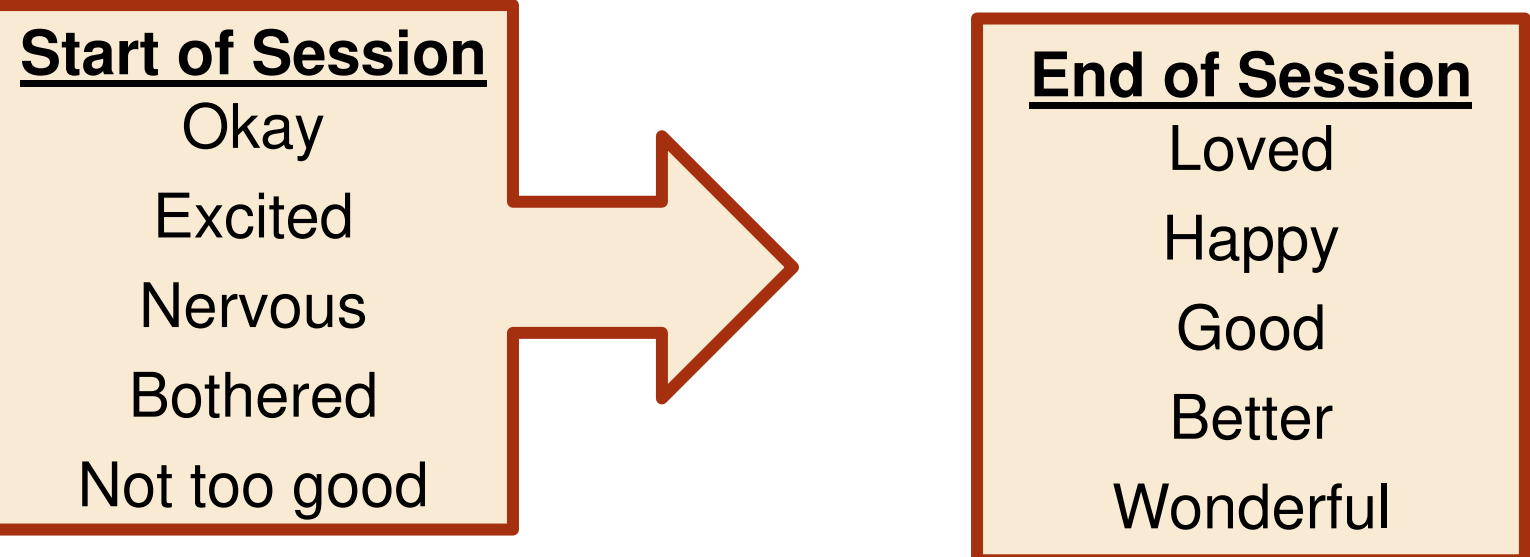
Outcomes

Evaluation of the program through the administration of the WHOQOL-BREF, a feelings check-in, post-program surveys for participant and staff, and through observations suggest that gardening and gardening-based activities done in a group setting improve QOL for elderly individuals with dementia.

WHOQOL-BREF Assessment Outcomes



Feelings Check-In Outcomes



Post-Program Survey for Participants Outcomes

% of Participants Who Answered "Yes"	Question
100%	Increase in social interaction
100%	Increase in opportunities for leisure/recreation activities
100%	Improvement in self-esteem
100%	Increased ability to participate in meaningful activities
80%	Increase in physical activity
100%	Increase in QOL

Scholarly Deliverables

1. **Program curriculum**
2. **Program flyer and brochure**
3. **Program activities binder**
4. **Program proposal with budget sheet and funding source**
5. **Program outcomes presentation**
6. **Case report**



Implications for OT

- Outcomes of the capstone project supports the practice of OT where occupations are used as a means for interventions.
- The capstone project can be used as a reference for OT practitioners when developing treatment plans with goals and objectives related to the improvement of QOL.
- Outcomes of the capstone project also support the role of OT in developing and implementing occupation-based programs to promote QOL through social connections, environmental health, psychological health, and physical health.

Acknowledgements

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References