

BRUSHSTROKES OF CARE: ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH ART-BASED HOME INTERVENTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ALZHEIMER’S



PRENY SAYADYAN, OTD/S
FACULTY MENTOR: ELISE LEIZEROVICH, OTD, OTR/L
SITE MENTOR: ANNE OH, MSG
WEST COAST UNIVERSITY - CENTER FOR GRADUATE STUDIES



About Alzheimer’s Los Angeles

- Tax-exempt non-profit organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Offers support groups, in-person and virtual educational workshops, care counselors, fundraising events, and programs to families, caregivers, and individuals living with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia.
- One such program, known as Memory Mornings, provides individuals with the opportunity to participate in cognitively stimulating activities that support physical, emotional, and psychosocial need
- Continuation of programs and services is made possible through generous contributions from local corporations, foundations, individuals, and fundraising events.

Mission

- “Improve the lives of 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.”

Organization Needs

1. Creative art interventions for sleep management
2. Caregiver education on stimulating art interventions
3. Effectiveness of art interventions on overall quality of life

Learning Objectives

- Develop and implement a six-week art-based online program that incorporates the principles of occupational therapy with interventions targeting skills in cognition, behavioral stimulation, and emotional recognition/communication.
- Measure the effectiveness of “Brushstrokes of Care: Art-Based Home Interventions” in improving skills in cognition, behavioral stimulation, and emotional recognition/communication.
- Assist in Memory Mornings and measure the effectiveness of this existing program in improving the overall quality of life in individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and other related dementias.

Literature Review

- Crucial to account for individuals' pre-existing experiences in music and art, which can potentially impact the outcomes of art-based interventions.
- Individuals living with dementia who listen to their favorite music and have prior music backgrounds experience notable reductions in stress levels, increased relaxation, and heightened happiness (Soufineyestani et al., 2021).
- Music engagement has been shown to capture an individual's attention, combat apathy, instill enjoyment, enhance self-esteem, and foster enduring behavioral improvements (Tang et al., 2018).
- Notable gap was evident in studies **investigating the physiological changes** arising from art interventions.
- Music therapy, a primary form of art intervention, harnesses the transformative power of music and sound to facilitate healing, elicit emotional expression, and enhance overall well-being in individuals living with Alzheimer's disease (Zilidou et al., 2023). Despite music's wide-ranging positive effects, there remained a **significant gap in research** exploring the **diverse forms of art interventions** and their potential to induce behavioral changes in individuals with Alzheimer’s.

Purpose of Program

- Create online video modules for caregivers outlining art interventions that can be conducted at home with loved ones diagnosed with Alzheimer’s to help keep them stimulated throughout the day, while also helping to strengthen skills in cognition, behavioral stimulation, and emotional recognition/communication.
- Offer caregivers tools and strategies to enhance their knowledge of stimulating activities that can be performed at home.

Project Description and Implementation

Program: “Brushstrokes of Care: Art-Based Home Interventions”

Program Objectives: Design and disseminate six video modules that highlight engaging art activities tailored for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease, aiming to enhance cognitive functions, facilitate better communication, stimulate behavioral engagement, and improve emotional recognition and expression. The videos were organized into three categories: two videos focused on cognitive enhancement, two aimed at behavioral stimulation, and two designed to improve emotional recognition and communication.

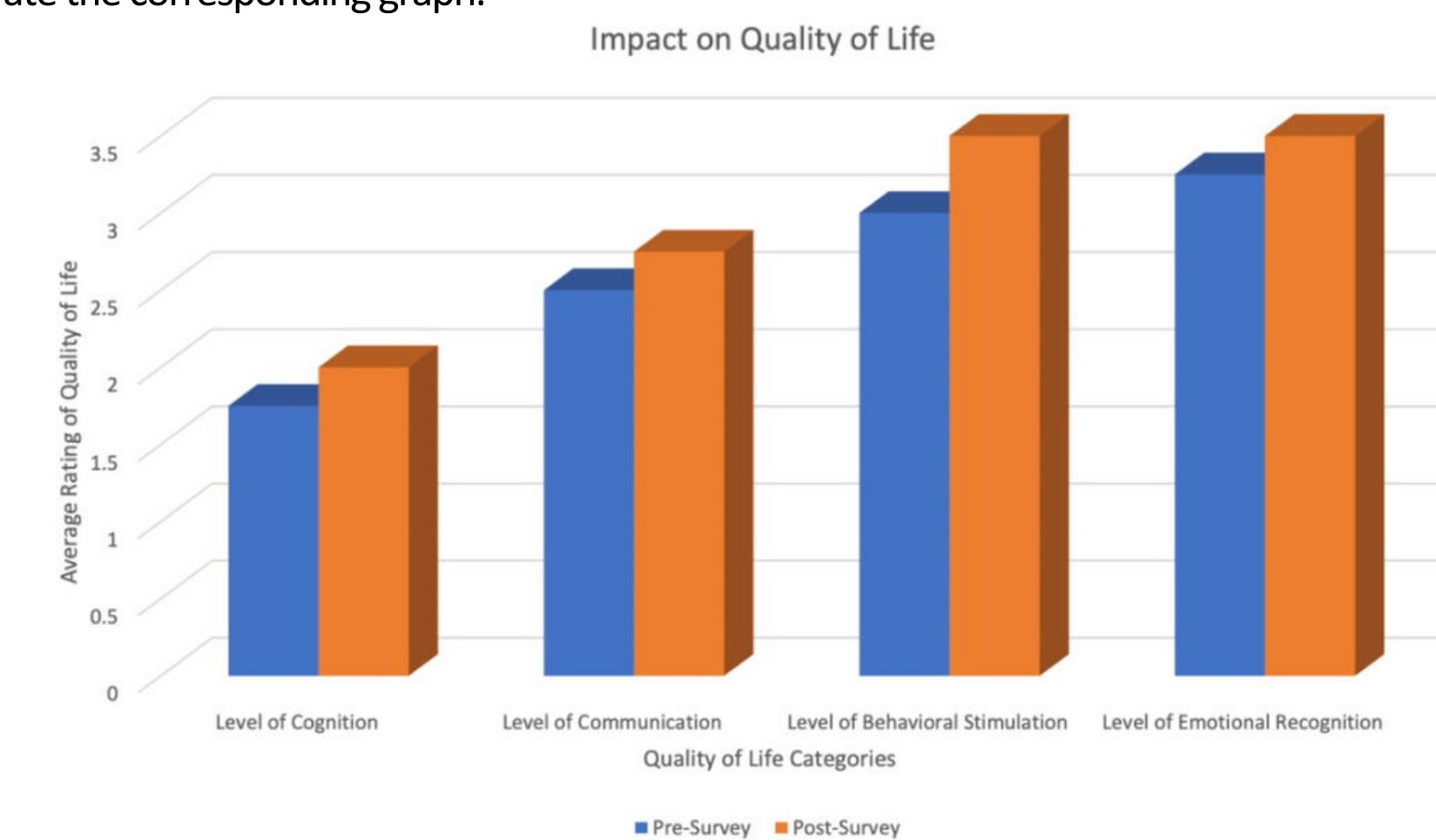
Implementation: Participants were given access to one new video module each week over the course of six weeks. This approach was chosen to allow participants, both caregivers and individuals with Alzheimer’s, ample time to engage with each activity, reflect on the experiences, and observe any changes or improvements.

Evaluation

- A pre- and post-survey methodology was used to assess the impact of the art-based interventions on participants. The pre-survey aimed to establish a baseline understanding of participants' cognitive, behavioral, and emotional functioning, as well as their perceived quality of life.
- Following the completion of the six-week program, the post-survey was administered to assess any changes or improvements in these areas. By comparing the responses from the pre- and post-surveys, the effectiveness of the art-based interventions in enhancing overall quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's and their caregivers could be analyzed.

Project Outcomes

Through the course of the program, four participants completed both the pre- and post- surveys, providing valuable insights into its overall impact. A paired t-test was used to analyze the results and generate the corresponding graph.



All in all, when examining improvements seen across all categories—cognition, communication skills, behavioral stimulation, and emotional recognition and expression—it is evident that there has been an improvement in the overall quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's participating in this study.

Scholarly Deliverables

- Introductory video
- Six video modules - Art interventions
- Six group protocols



Limitations

- Relatively small sample size
- Limited duration of intervention period
- Virtual nature of program delivery

Implications for the Profession

- By using art as a therapeutic modality, occupational therapists can enhance the quality of life and well-being of individuals living with dementia, thereby fulfilling the profession's core mission of promoting meaningful engagement in daily activities.
- Furthermore, the findings suggest that virtual delivery of art-based interventions can be a viable and accessible option for individuals with Alzheimer's disease.

Ideas for Future Directions

- Expanding the scope of the program to include a larger and more diverse sample of participants could provide further insights into the effectiveness of art-based interventions across different stages of dementia.
- Incorporating caregiver education into the program could enhance its sustainability and provide caregivers

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References available upon request.