

REMINISCENCE THERAPY FOR OLDER ADULTS




Goals of Presentation



- Describe the process of reminiscence
- Describe the utility of reminiscence as an intervention for older adults
- Summarize some of the benefits of reminiscence with sub populations
- Demonstrate an example of reminiscence

REMINISCENCE



- "The act or process of recalling the past" (Butler, 1963)
- Related to Erikson's – "ego integrity vs. despair" stage of later life. Integrating previous life experiences with those of the present to determine life's meaning and purpose.
- Dr. Robert Butler – founder of the term, "ageism", reminiscence can have positive impact on integration of history/present/future
- Naturally occurring process – integrated in multiple settings

Why do People Reminisce?

Many Reasons:

- ▣ Preserves sense of self – “I was that person”
- ▣ Joins people to each other – “I’ve had similar experiences”
- ▣ Provides a pleasurable outlet – “I can’t do that anymore, but I can remember it and share it.”

Benefits of Reminiscing

- ▣ Communication and self-expression
- ▣ Social interaction and connection
- ▣ Feelings of belonging
- ▣ Self-worth and achievement
- ▣ Sharing of ideas, problems and concerns
- ▣ Opportunity to learn about the past
- ▣ Promote use of five senses



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Reminiscence: Evidence Based Outcomes

Dementia:

- ▣ Small improvements in cognitive functioning - MMSE
- ▣ Increased ability to recall information
- ▣ Improved verbal and narrative discourse
- ▣ Greater number of conversational contributions

(Kim et al., 2006)

Depression:

- ▣ Improvements in depressive symptoms, hopelessness, functional impairment and life satisfaction (SAMHSA, 2011)

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Reminiscence Process



Reminiscence involves a discussion:

- Of past activities, events and experiences
- With another person or group of people
- Using photographs, household and other familiar items from the past, music and archive sound recordings
- That takes place at least once a week
- That aids in the life review process

A Discussion About Reminiscence



Kristen Copes, LSW

- Kristen Copes is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) specializing in end-of-life care with older adults.
- Kristen will talk about how she has integrated reminiscence in hospice care using life journals and activities that evoke memory using the senses.
- Kristen provides descriptive case examples/stories to illustrate application of reminiscence and tips for getting started.
- Click on or copy and paste the weblink below to listen to this podcast:
 - <https://gsu.sharestream.net/ssdcms/i.do?u=a3995053d03a460>

Techniques



- Individual or Group?
- Use five senses...
- Don't rush communication – pathways into experience
- Start with non threatening topics – build trust
- Be a good listener! Allow time for thoughts/feelings
- Have a theme? Memories, family life, transitions...

CASE EXAMPLE: Older Men



- Julie was a Masters of Social Work student who interned at the Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA) for her second year advanced internship. As part of her internship, she needed to complete a needs assessment and develop a new program that would benefit and add value to ACCA's service delivery. In order to accomplish this task, she spent numerous hours observing and collecting information about the programs, events, and opportunities at the Center.
- After a few weeks, she came up with her project. She observed that the men who attended the Center participated in fewer of the activity sessions and groups than the women. She did some research on older men and leisure pursuits and determined that older men are more goal or outcome focused than women. That is, men might be more interested in a program that has a structured product or process than women who seemed to be more interested in the experience of the activity.

CASE EXAMPLE: Older Men cont.

- For those of you who aren't familiar with ACCA, it is located in the site of an old train depot in Athens. Julie used the historical significance of this site to structure a reminiscence group for older men. Because of the importance of trains in the life of this cohort, she used the train station as the topic for the group. The sessions were held weekly for six weeks, and with a new topic each time. Examples of topics included: trains as transportation, life in the station, and comings and goings. Julie would bring in something that related to the topic that week – pictures, or songs that involved trains (e.g. Chattanooga Choo Choo). She also invited the men to bring their mementos that linked with the topic.
- The outcome of these sessions was very interesting! First, the men were interested and attendance was good. They seemed to like to share memories around a structured topic and would bring in old photos. Secondly, the topics provided an opportunity for deepening relationships. For example, one of the men told a story about leaving from the train station to go off to World War II as a young soldier – what it was like to leave home for the war. Another told of his big brother going to war, and about his feeling of being left at home to work the farm. An African American man talked about his experience of being in the train station when it was segregated – and having to sit in the Colored section of the station. An additional story was about a young boy who came to the "big city of Athens" to see the train as an outing with his father and how close he felt to his dad on these trips.

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