THE ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
KEEPING PERSONS WITH DEMENTIA ACTIVE

WHAT DOES OCCUPATION MEAN TO YOU?
POVERTY OF OCCUPATION

THE GOOD NEWS

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS!!!

Memory is not essential to doing things and enjoying life!
CLIENT BENEFITS OF ACTIVITY

- Minimize rate of cognitive decline (Brooker and Woolley, 2007)
- Improved sense of self worth (Smith, Kolanowski, Buettner, and Buckwalter, 2009)
- Improved sleep (Smith et. al, 2009)
- Emotions stay with the person, even if they forget the activity (Feinstein, 2010)
CAREGIVER BENEFITS OF ACTIVITY

• Increased satisfaction for caregivers (Hasselkus, 2007).

• “The use of purposeful activity reduces agitation, decreases restraint and pharmacological use, and enhances quality of life for this population.” (The Tailored Activity Program - Gitlin, Winter, Vause Earland, Herge, Chemett, Piersol, and Burke, 2009).

TAILORED ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Why focus on activity engagement?

• Preserved capabilities are an overlooked aspect of dementia

• OTs are in a unique position to assess capabilities of care-recipients and then design activity programs tailored to their capabilities
TAP INTERVENTION BASICS

• Functional assessment using Allen assessments and survey of interests; try CPT as an alternative

• Customization of activities and “activity prescription”

• Caregiver training

CASE EXAMPLE - JOHN

• 81 year old retired accountant
• Father of 7 children.
• Married over 60 years.
• History of vascular dementia (multiple strokes)
• Attends day center 2x/week
• Loves to sing, play Bridge with family, great sense of humor (comedian, life of the party)
• MMSE – 13
• LACLS – 3.4
JOHN’S ABILITIES

1. Good hand skills - able to grasp, release, and throw objects
2. Follows simple 1 step directions with additional cueing (pointing and short verbal cues work best)
3. Good attention and tolerance up to 30 minutes with activities of interest
4. Able to distinguish between size, shape, and feel of objects
5. Able to place objects in “a row” and “into and out” of containers
6. Sustains repetitive actions; needs some assist to progress to next level

ACTIVITY PRESCRIPTION

• Activity Goal: Client will attend to modified cognitive stimulation task that matches client’s cognitive functional level for 15 minutes with set-up and minimal cuing from caregiver.

• Activity Tasks:
  • Sort large print playing cards
  • “What’s the next line?” with familiar songs
  • ?
ACTIVITY PRESCRIPTION

Simplify activity and environment

• Reduce clutter and noise distractions
• Place cards directly in front of John, within line of sight
• Allow sufficient time for John to engage in card activity
• Relax standard of performance (there is no right or wrong way)

ACTIVITY PRESCRIPTION

Enhance John’s participation

• Draw on John’s long-term memory with songs
• For card sorting, draw on John’s ability to perform repetition and past interest in cards
• Help John initiate and sequence - use a guiding touch and a simple command
• Choose a time of day when he’s alert (after a nap)
ACTIVITY PRESCRIPTION

Communicate Effectively

- Use encouragement - Praise John after completing the activity
- Use short commands
- If John leaves the activity, use a calm voice and redirect him back, or wait 15 minutes and reintroduce the activity

ACTIVITY PRESCRIPTION

Caregiver Strategies

- Relax; take a few deep breaths
- There is no right or wrong way to do the activity
- Feel good about yourself - you are doing a great job
SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

The 3 R’s

**Routine**

**Reduce**

**Reassure**

- **Routine** - Same activities done in a typical order and timeline each day.

- **Reduce** - Less steps, less words in directions, less abstractness to the task

- **Reassure** - Ask for their help; give encouragement and praise
ACTIVITY RESOURCES

• Occupational Therapist
  • The Pool Activity Level (PAL) Instrument for Occupational Profiling (Jackie Pool, 2008, Jessica Kingsley Publishers)
• Physical
  • Outdoor walking paths, YMCA, mall-walking
  • Kairos Dance program “The Dancing Hearts”
    • www.kairosdance.org
• Social
  • Adult Day Programs
    • www.madsa.org
  • Memory Clubs
    • www.alz.org/mnnd
  • Reminisce magazine
    • www.reminisce.com
  • Children
  • Memory Scrapbook – www.mind-start.com

ACTIVITY RESOURCES

• Cognitive
  • Jigsaw puzzles, word searches and simple games designed for people with dementia
    • www.mind-start.com
• Books
  • Strengthen the Mind: A Book of Activities for People with Early Memory Loss by Kristin Einberger and Janelle Sellick
  • Two-Lap Book series by Lydia Burdick
  • Let’s Look Together: An Interactive Picture Book for People with Memory Loss by Rae-Lynn Cebul Ziegler
• Ideals
  • Fill in the blank proverbs, nursery rhymes
    • http://www.barbarasmithoccupationaltherapist.com/activitybook.html
• Storytelling
  • www.timeslips.org
ACTIVITY RESOURCES

- Sensory/Spiritual
  - Art programs
    - Minneapolis Institute of Arts
    - Walker Art Center - Contemporary Journeys
- Outdoors
  - Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
  - Como Conservatory
  - Nature Centers
- Other
  - MindStart Monthly Newsletter - sign up at www.mind-start.com
    - Easy Activity Ideas, Caregiver tips

REFERENCES

EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF ADAPTED VS. STANDARD ACTIVITY DEMANDS AND MATERIALS WITH MEMORY CARE RESIDENTS

PATRICIA SCHABER, PHD, OTR/L, KELLY ANDERSON, OTS, COREY BRUCE, OTS, HOLLY CAHALAN, OTS, AND DARY KRUGER, OTS
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

ACTIVITY DEMANDS AND MATERIALS

Leisure activities in memory care facilities have specific activity demands dependent on many factors: objects used, space, social demands, sequencing and timing, and required actions. In memory care, activity demands can be altered when the objects used are designed specifically for people who are experiencing cognitive decline. This study will examine the behavioral responses with standard and adapted activity materials in a group activity program.

1. AOTA Practice Framework (2008)
RESEARCH QUESTION

- Question: What qualities or behaviors are elicited with adapted vs. standard activity materials used in group sessions in memory care facilities?

- Hypothesis: The adapted activity materials will improve mood, increase engagement, decrease amount of staff support needed, and decrease disruptive/off task behaviors compared to the standard activity demands and materials.

STUDY

- Six memory care tenants consenting to participate
- Adequate vision, hearing, and attention span
- Videotaped five sessions; bingo, word find, puzzles, and lacing with standard and adapted activity materials
MEASURES

- Menorah Park Engagement Scale
- Observing Quality of Life in Dementia
- Revised Memory and Behavior Problem Checklist
- Field notes: #verbal prompts, demonstrations, assists
- Cognition

PRELIMINARY RESULTS