

Project Title

From Passion to Purpose – Developing a Garden with our Seniors

Project Lead and Members

Project lead: Anandarajah Giselle Gelena, Wang Xiao Yan

Project members: Kaminni D/O Vamadevan, Lim Thuan Gay, Reginald Ronald S/O

Ariaya Kannu

Organisation(s) Involved

Ren Ci Hospital

Healthcare Family Group Involved in this Project

Allied Care; Allied Health

Applicable Specialty or Discipline

Senior Care Centre, Occupational Therapy

Aims

- To develop a sensory therapeutic garden together with clients
- To be inclusive, engaging clients of varying functional abilities
- To promote positive mood and quality of life through engagement in meaningful Occupation

Background

See poster appended/ below

Methods

See poster appended/ below

Results

See poster appended/ below

Conclusion

See poster appended/ below

Project Category

Care Continuum

Intermediate and Long Term Care & Community Care, Day Care

Workforce Transformation

Informal Workforce Transformation, Community Engagement

Keywords

Sensory Therapeutic Gardening

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2023

Poster
#14

FROM PASSION TO PURPOSE – DEVELOPING A GARDEN WITH OUR SENIORS

Team Leads

Anandarajah Giselle Gelena | Wang Xiao Yan

Team Members

Kaminni D/O Vamadevan | Lim Thuan Gay | Reginald Ronald S/O Ariaya Kannu



Project Synopsis

From Passion to Purpose: Clients at Ren Ci @ Ang Mo Kio Senior Care Centre identified gardening as one of their top interests. They were involved in transforming an underutilised garden plot into a sensory therapeutic garden.

Introduction

Ren Ci @ Ang Mo Kio Senior Care Centre (SCC) has an outdoor veranda with a small garden plot. Before this project, the garden was underutilised with no specific gardening activities being carried out. Several clients attending the centre expressed their love and interest for gardening through the interest checklist that we administer. Many expressed sadness that they no longer had opportunity to do gardening as in their youth due to their functional limitations or lack of opportunity to do so. The team and clients decided to co-develop a gardening programme that clients of various physical and cognitive status could engage in, transforming the garden plot into a sensory therapeutic garden.

Objectives

- To develop a sensory therapeutic garden together with clients
- To be inclusive, engaging clients of varying functional abilities
- To promote positive mood and quality of life through engagement in meaningful occupation

Project Details

- Our SCC clients are of varying physical and cognitive status, ranging from independent higher functioning clients to fully assisted lower functioning clients. Upon admission, an interest checklist is done to identify the interests of our clients. A group of 11 clients identified gardening as one of their top 3 interests. The team discussed with each of these clients individually to understand their interests better and those who consented joined the programme. 6 clients gave consent to join the project.
- The therapeutic gardening programme, guided by an Occupational Therapist and 2 Therapy aides, commenced in Oct 2022.
- The team came up with a plan to develop the therapeutic garden in stages, starting from growing the seeds in pots to eventually transferring them to the garden plot. Roles were assigned to clients based on their functional ability. Higher functioning clients selected the plants they wanted to grow including edible plants such as chilli which they wanted to eventually bring home to cook. The team also decided to develop a sensory therapeutic garden to engage the lower functioning clients. They selected fragrant herbal plants to grow such as mint, rosemary and basil plants so that the lower functioning clients could engage in sensory stimulation.

Benefits of Therapeutic Gardening

- Promotes mobility, positive reminiscences and reduces agitation
- Improves memory, attention, sense of responsibility and social interaction
- Improves self esteem, physical and mental wellbeing
- Increases feelings of calm and relaxation
- Provides sensory stimulation

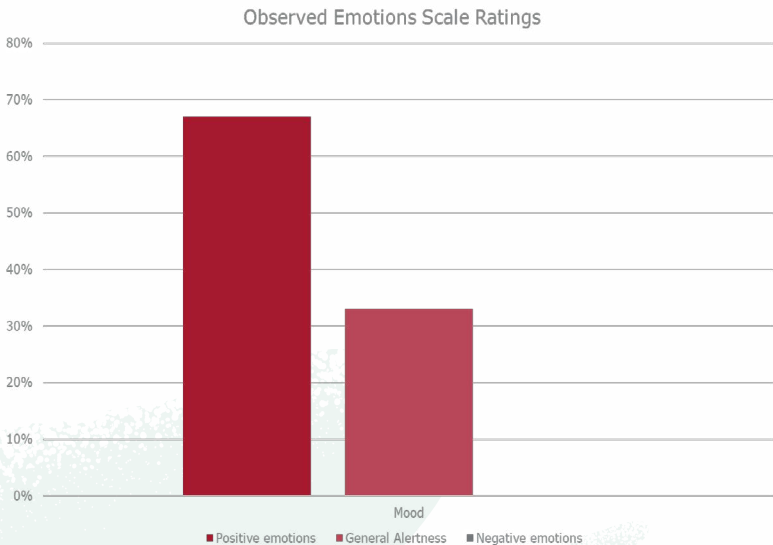
(Detweiler et. al., 2012)



Project Outcomes

- A sensory therapeutic garden was developed by both higher and lower functioning clients consisting of herbal and edible plants such as chilli, basil and mint leaves. Some clients took the chilli home to cook and the herbal plants were used for sensory stimulation activities at the centre.
- The Observed Emotion Rating Scale was used to monitor the mood of all clients during their participation in the gardening task. All clients displayed positive emotions (pleasure) or general alertness during their engagement in gardening. Of the 6 clients who participated, 4 showed positive emotions and 2 showed general alertness. No clients displayed negative emotions of sadness, anger or fear/anxiety.

(Lawton et. al., 1999)



Conclusion

The underutilised garden plot has been successfully transformed into a sensory therapeutic garden enjoyed by both clients and staff. It continues to be maintained by SCC clients. The ongoing plan is to continue to engage and activate clients in the expansion of the garden and growing new plants.

References

- Detweiler, M.B., Sharma, T., Detweiler, J.G., Murphy, P.F., Lane, S., Carman, J., Chudhary, A.S., Halling, M.H. & Kim, K.Y. (2012). What is the evidence to support the use of therapeutic gardens for the elderly? *Psychiatry Investigation*, 9: 100-110.
- Lawton, M.P., K. Van Haitsma, J.A. Klapper. (1999) Observed Emotion Rating Scale. Retrieved from www.abramsoncenter.org/PRI.