My Grandfriend – A Pilot Intergenerational Programme In A Nursing Home

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INTRODUCTION

My Grandfriend Programme

This programme aimed to be a platform for participants to: (1) Interact and discover legacies from a grandfriend; (2) Experience a unique, first-hand experience of life within a NH ward; (3) Understand ageing-related challenges and opportunities in the local context; (4) Appreciate the healthcare and logistical operations of a NH and (5) Discover roles of supporting facilities (Day-care centres, Active Ageing Hub).

OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAMME

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance and experience of the participants with the programme.

METHODS

• Nine student participants aged between 17 to 22 participated in this programme.
• Pre- and post-programme questionnaires were administered to all 9 student participants. General acceptability and experience during programme, barriers and facilitators for IG interaction, learning points, and suggestions were elicited.
• Attitudes towards seniors was measured using the semantic scale developed by Rosencrans and Rosencrans (2018). This scale measured three dimensions which included (1) Instrumental - Ineffective; (2) Autonomous - Dependent and (3) Personal Acceptability - Unacceptability dimensions. A lower score indicates a more favourable attitude.
• Qualitative data was analyzed using inductive analysis for theme identification, while descriptive analysis was performed for quantitative data.

RESULTS

• Seven out of the nine participants had no previous volunteering experiences with elderly. After the programme, however, all participants indicated that they would be willing to participate in similar IG programmes in the future.
• The evaluation indicated that the overall experience that the young participants had with this programme was positive. The programme was reported to provide students with content knowledge that helped students better understand the needs and physical challenges faced by elderly, provided them with opportunities to interact with elderly in a safe space, and facilitated a shift towards a more positive perception of the elderly.
• Though some respondents reported that challenges faced during the programme prevented a more positive perception of elderly, all participants reported an increased levels of confidence in communicating with the elderly.

Findings from the post-programme survey

• Seven participants reported the experience was pleasant (n=5) / very pleasant (n=2).
• All participants reported an improved understanding about physiological challenges faced by an elderly in his/her daily life.

“I no know a lot more about the illnesses and conditions that elderly experience and i feel this would be useful to me in determining how i interact with other elderly and my grandparents as well” – P08, male, 18 years old

• Despite the short duration of the camp, it was noteworthy that a significant change was observed in the personal acceptability-unacceptability dimension of the “Attitudes towards seniors” scale (P=0.019), indicating a favourable change in attitude towards the elderly.

Table 1. Semantic scales measuring attitudes towards the elderly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental – Ineffective</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>0.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous – Dependent</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Acceptability – Unacceptability</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>0.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Lower score indicates a more favorable attitude.

CONCLUSION

Enhancing intergenerational bonding through experiential learning in a local nursing home was found to have beneficial outcomes on both the younger and older generations, in terms of communication, shifts in perceptions, and facilitate the understanding of needs of both parties. Some challenges to a quality interaction identified, to be addressed in future camps, include the lack of confidence in the young to initiate conversations, trust to establish common interests or new knowledge about one another, as well as language abilities. Findings have identified gaps in the needs and expectations of students participants in areas relating to: the type and duration of IG activities, content and focus of lectures, discussion and departmental visits. These insights are critical in providing guidance for refining and improving on similar programmes in future, and provides a model for adoption in other aged care facilities in Singapore.

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REFERENCES