

AN INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR THE PSYCHOSOCIAL NECESSITIES OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION OF TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

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ABSTRACT--- *As the necessities of the growing elderly population increase, the psychological requirements have increased the same amount. Nevertheless, the services for the elderly in our island can be insufficient on the cases of preserving and improving the psychosocial skills of the elderly. Nurses, who are one the pillar members of the medical teams, have a key role in the holistic care of the elderly. For this reason, there is a need for psychological and social care models on treatments of elderly citizens for the nurses besides the physical care. In this article, it has been aimed to propose a psychosocial intervention programme for the elderly citizens to minimize their problems specific to today, to make them more independent, and to help them overcome daily problems.*

Keywords--- *Elderliness, Psychosocial Intervention, Nursing Care.*

I. INTRODUCTION

As with the increasing elderly population the psychological requirements of the elderly citizens have gained importance (1,2,3,4). There is a need for improving the procedures of the psychosocial necessity maintenance of the elderly in order to them to be self-sustaining and more independent on daily activities (5, 6). This is because, the services that are provided can be insufficient on the cases of preserving and improving the psychosocial skills of the elderly.

To provide the feeling of being a self-sustaining person to elderly people is the foundation of the elder care (7). It is a right for the elderly to obtain and a mission for the health care workers provide these services. It is also crucial to elderly to live a peaceful life and younger generations to be hopeful and optimistic for the future. In this context, the problems that elderly people go through has to be handled as whole with the bio-psychosocial aspect of the matter (8). This situation carries importance for the senior citizens to adapt to the elderliness period using their previous life experiences (9, 10, 11).

In Elderliness period, alongside physical capability decline, there is also psychological decline. With the decline in the social role, self-esteem and authority, Individual feels incompetence, inefficacy, hopelessness,

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dependency on others, fear of being alone and death. To minimize the problems of the Elderliness period will be possible with the supply of the psychosocial support (12).

In a holistic approach to elder care and psychological and social aspects of elderliness, nurses, who are one of the pillar members of the medical teams, have a key role (13,14). For this reason, there is a need for care models for nurses devoted to senior citizens. Therefore, there will be a chance given for the elderly people active and controlling their lives, improve their quality of life, sustain and use their existing potential in a positive way.

II. PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

The proposed programme is a “Psycho-educational” themed group intervention (15) and it is prepared for to train elder people against a potential threat or a progressive daily event and to improve their coping mechanism during a crisis. The purpose of the Psychosocial Intervention sessions is to reduce the negative effects of the psychological, social and physical that the elder people face, to improve the person-to-person interaction of the person, to enhance the coherence of the person with the society by improving the communication skills, to inform them about the era they are living in, to make them realise their needs, to leave a positive impact for the future, to raise awareness on the problems that occur and to help them build effective coping methods. The general purpose of the sessions is to improve the quality of life and give a positive perception on elderliness. In the direction of these aims, in sessions, there are short informative briefings, and also in sessions there is skill improvement exercises and homework for transferring what is learned into daily life and to be ready for the next session. In sessions, as equipment and supplies, there are Barco vision, blackboard, colour pencils, paint, small cards, old pictures, antiques and music, also for exercises, visual presentations, Q&A and discussion methods, homework and group warm-up games are recommended. In every session the previous session should be summarized and the length of the sessions has been determined as 90-120 minutes each.

1st Session

Subject: Meeting and introduction of the programme and the formation of the group consciousness. What elderliness? How do you live it?

Aim: Meeting of the group members and founding the interaction between them, forming communication between members, founding trust between members, informing generally the members about elderliness, learning the normal progression and the possible problems of elderliness, revising the period they are living in, noticing the psychological, social and physical changes in elderliness period, if there is any false beliefs/knowledge, correcting those, setting forth the expectations from this period, making them notice that they are not alone in this period.

Target: The members will know each other, they will be informed about content of the sessions, the group rules will be known and group consciousness will be formed, elderliness period progression features and possible problem will be known, solutions will be proposed and awareness will be raised, members will be informed about the knowledge they need, positive health habits will be known, unhealthy habits will be distinguished and will be changed with healthy habits.

The Applied Techniques and Exercises: The definition of Warm-Up activity (8)
Session Content and Process:
-Moderator introduces himself/herself

-The Group rules and progress of the period are explained, if the participants have something to add to the rules, it is taken into account.

-The dates for group sessions are set and the importance of regular attendance is explained.

-To set the name of the group, members are advised, the name is set by unanimity.

-With the group game, group members are asked to introduce themselves, for this, small cards and colour pencils are distributed to the participants, the meaning of their name or the adjectives they want to state is asked to write/draw on the distributed cards.

-Each member shares by showing the meaning of their name or the adjective that represents themselves, every member is supported to express themselves.

-A general briefing on elderliness is given with a PowerPoint presentation prepared by the researcher. The group members are supported to notice the positive changes that elderliness creates, thus, the group members are to gain information about their health and habits and attitude to keep themselves healthy.

-Starting from the voluntary members, every members experience and thoughts on elderliness is shared. Changes of elderliness, care and perspective on elderliness is discussed and every member is supported to express themselves on their experiences, perception and lifestyles.

-The session is summarized and members' thoughts and feeling are asked.

-Group members, for next session, are asked to bring a picture or an item related to their past life.

-The session is ended by telling the topic of the next session.

2nd Session

Subject: Knowing yourself and raising awareness.

Aim: Revealing of every group members perception and interpretation of elderliness, realising their situation in adaptation to elderliness.

Target: Awareness of his/her situation will improve, group members will express the meaning of elderliness from their perspective, he/she will realise his/her adaptation problems, he/she will be able bring solution proposals to his/her problems, he/she will be able to live his/her life more active and meaningful.

The Applied Techniques and Exercises: Package has arrived from the mail (16) Past Picture (8)

Session Content and Process:

-The aims and content of the session is explained to the group members.

-“Package has arrived from mail” event is used to get the group members to get warmed up to the session. For this event, group members are asked to close their eyes and imagine a package arrived, and then afterwards they are asked to open up the package to look inside and when they are ready, they are asked open their eyes and they are asked to talk about the package and what it contains. Sender of the package is then checked so the members are made to think about their expectations and difficulties deriving from these.

-A journey to past, via the pictures and items, which have been asked from the members prior that are related to past, is done, members are asked to express their feelings and thoughts on their personal items and pictures, memories are shared and feeling are discussed.

-To make them remember that their past life is meaningful, to increase their self-integrity and to make tom feel strong, members in turns, are asked to share their good memories and family pictures to other participants.

- Recalling the past time and to compare it with current state is asked.

-The areas that are, with old age, successes and fulfilments are discussed. Even though the physical strength decays, gaining more understanding and wisdom, forming better and more social relationships with congeneric people, being more open minded and indulgent, witnessing his/her own children growing to be responsible and successful adults, becoming a grandparent, even though professionally degraded, continuation of skills and having the experience leverage.

-The importance of focusing on enriching the life and having that life is limited in mind and living their current lives under their control in good way is told and supporting them to do this.

-The session is summarized, the thoughts and feelings of the members are asked.

--The session is ended by telling the topic of the next session.

3rd Session

Subject: Increasing self-respect

Aim: Raising awareness on sense of self, making them realise their negative and positive sides, supporting the positive sides

Target: Personality will be identified, Negative and Positive sides will be listed, Member, on noticing and sustaining positive sides, will be susceptible, the positive sides will be noticed and evaluated.

The Applied Techniques and Exercises: SWOT Analysis

Session Content and Process:

-The aims and the content of the session is explained to the group members.

-Cards are handed out to the group members and members are asked to write down their strong and weak sides. For understanding the strong sides explanations are made to the group members. These are: What advantages (skillsets, abilities) do you have that other people do not have? What are the things that you do better than others? What are your strengths? Do you have accomplishment that you are proud of? If so what are they?

- Members are made explanations about noticing their strong sides and how they can use them in their lives, members are discussed about noticing, accepting and strengthening their weak sides, members are discussed on how to make improvements from chances of improvements through their examples/experiences.

-The group members are asked what are the threats and opportunities that may occur in their lives and asked to write them down. In order to make understanding easier group members are made explanations on threats and opportunities. Thus, in the context of "SWOT Analysis" the strengths, values and supports they have are noticed to the members.

- The group members are supported on the topic of that they should perceive themselves special and unique because of what they have and are asked how they feel about it.

-Members are ensured to feel precious and to see their positive sides with these feature they possess and are talked about their feelings and thoughts on this subject.

-The session is summarized, the session is ended by telling the topic of the next session.

4th Session

Subject: The problems that are experienced in elderliness: Personal and Social Strengthening

Physical Incapability/weakness (being inactive), the loss of being independent, lack of social interaction, corruption in domestic interaction and the burden of domestic economy, loneliness

Aim: Support of Independency, Realisation of existing potential, strengthening of social interaction, Drawing attention and helping to find solution proposals to increasing burden of domestic economy and corruption of domestic interaction, identifying the negative thoughts and physical or sensory barrier that affect the social interactions.

Target: The factors that cause weakness and block independency will noticed, The problems of health that exist or may exist will be listed and the ways of using the potential that exist to the fullest will be known, the social bonds will be understood and the ways of reconstructing them will be known, for social support, the family, friends and institutional networks will be found and these networks will be sustained and the communication skills will be improved, In order to lighten the burden of the other person in the family (partner, child etc.), the adequate sides will be noticed and will be used, the people that is under his/her care will be empathised, the ways of sustaining socially supported active life will be known, the thoughts that affect negatively his/her social life will be noticed and will be changed, ways to compensate for physical and sensory barriers that stand in the way of improving social interaction will be determined.

The Applied Techniques and Exercises: Social Atom (17)

Session Content and Process:

- The aims and the content of the process is explained to the group members.
- The experiences related to the possible health problems, with the strong sides from last session in mind, is shared, what they have experienced due to diseases and physiological changes caused by age are shared, the ways of dealing with these symptoms are questioned and discussed. Realisation of the skills of the group members are supported, members feeling effective and adequate is supported.
- By handing out cards and pencil social atom activity starts. The aim of this activity is to make the members realise “where does he/she see himself and where does he put people close to him/her?) in that social environment. Thus, the social relationships that are supportive and assuring are realised.
- Each member is asked to locate themselves on the paper in the shape, colour and size, after this, it is asked to put the people that they feel close to, in the intimacy degree order. Subsequently, each member is asked to share the shapes that they made with the other members of the group. Members are supported about that they are not alone when their needs of trust and belonging met and are asked about their feelings.
- The group member are informed about expressing themselves effectively for creating and sustaining good relationships with their family and close social circle, making requests with body language, active listening and empathising skills. The group members are asked questions about the nature of their current and past relationships, their expectations, whether they were fulfilled and happy or not and what they want to have different. By asking to define their relations with others it is helped to set realistic and possible goals to expand the social network (use of a hearing-aid device, meeting people in well-lit places etc.).
- By pointing out the thoughts that affect group members’ social interactions negatively, it is supported and encouraged to change these negative thoughts with positive ones.
- The session is summarized, the feelings and thoughts of the members are discussed.
- The session is ended by telling the topic of the next session.

5th Session

Subject: The problem that are experienced in elderliness and solutions: Support to prevent Strength loss and Depressive Signs of it (insignificancy inadequacy, hopelessness etc.) and adaptation to role changes.

Aim: Supporting and making the members perceive their strong sides by understanding their weak and strong sides, making the members realise their entrepreneurship on the things that they believe they can handle and their adequacy on reaching their goals, improving their skills to cope with their new roles functions and adapting to the new life and changing roles, determining the reasons that cause depression.

Target: The group members will be aware of their strong and positive sides that they possess, by generally assessing themselves they will say that they feel adequate and strong enough to control their lives, Emotions on changing roles will be expressed, the new role will be accepted and adapted, interest and satisfaction to life will be improved.

The Applied Techniques and Exercises: Me now me back in the past (16) Brainstorming

Session Content and Process:

-The aims and the content of the session is explained to the members.

The Group members are asked close their eyes, get comfortable and to pick a picture about the past from themselves, afterwards, they are asked to open their eyes and talk about their picture, therefore, the members compare and talk about their state now and their state in the picture from the past.

-The members are made to remember the period, they share what they lived through fulfilling their past roles and the experiences were added to their lives, and are reminded that all roles in life have positive and negative aspects and that a positive lesson can be taken away from even a negative aspect, and then to use this to add meaning to their lives.

-The members are made to realise the positive or potentially positive aspects of the new role by supporting their assessment of new positive opportunities (having more time to work on their areas of interest, being closer to family members. Also, they are supported in deciding and planning around an appropriate environment to acquire new skills that make success easier in their new roles (educational classes, support groups, social meetings, volunteer possibilities) and thus, instead of pulling out of or avoiding such new situations, are given opportunities to improve.

-They are informed of the basic factors (bodily symptoms, mental breakdowns, self-aimed harsh words) in determining depressive symptoms. They are supported in defining conflict and problems within their life stories. They are made to share insufficient problem solving, broken thought and beliefs about stressful living events and situations, and the effects of these situations and about what can be done about it, and provide for them to hold interest towards daily life activities and to enjoy life.

-Cards are given to the members and they are asked to think about problems that they live with, first writing in the first column what they can do themselves and what they can control, and in the next, are asked what happens outside of their control and what they can't control.

-Using a brainstorm technique, group members are reminded of their strong suits, are asked to share their preferred solutions against problems, to review the positive and negative aspects of the results, and to define realistic targets. They are helped to find positive alternatives in place of unrealistic ways of thinking.

-The session is summarised, and the members are asked to share their feelings and thoughts. The session is ended by giving information about the next session's subject.

6thSession

Subject: Past regrets, uncertainty towards the future and dealing with concern of death.

Aim: Ascertaining the values, requests and sources that the group members have, expressing these by correlating them with past regrets, being made to realise the aspects of these that reflect on their current life, the apprehension of things that could occur in the future that affects their current life (for example, the insignificance of life, the uncertainty of death etc.) and the education on what can be done about these things.

Target: The group members will realise their values, requests and sources, will express these requests, sources and values in correlation with their regrets, will realise the aspects of these regrets that affect their current life, will know how their current life will be affected when the uncertainty of what may happen in the future comes, will explain the subjects of the insignificance of life and the uncertainty of death, will count what can be done about the subjects of the insignificance of life and the uncertainty of death, will create positive expectations about the future and will say that life has significance.

Session Content and Process:

-The aims and content of the session is explained to the group members.

-They are made to remember experiences and events that were long forgotten (school, work life, love life, travels, family relations) and thus support the feeling of content in past connections and lives, are made to share and realise areas of their life that they value as positive and it is focused on what can be done to overcome hardships that are only found in the elderly era.

-The group members are made to realise that the control over their own lives belongs to them, seeing what meaning this adds to their life, and are provided a raise in their enjoyment of life by making positive reinforcements.

-The group members, to express what they feel towards life and death, are asked to share feelings such as an anger towards god for the injustice caused when the meaning of life is lost, having questions about life after death, and the effect of life events such as feeling fear or asking for forgiveness.

-They are supported in making behaviour and activity that will raise the enjoyment of life in the next phase of their life through emphasis on process of the rise of faith, thought, feeling and behaviour.

-The group members are informed about dealing processes that give mental enjoyment of life (praying, reading, helping others, meditation) and are supported in doing so.

-Emphasis is made on the fact that death is real and that it is a part of life and they are asked to focus on what they can do for what they are living right now.

-The session is summarised, and is ended by giving information on the subject of the next session.

7thSession

Subject: Giving meaning to life, effective coping and harmony

Aim: For the group members to know the definition, reason and effects of stress on the body, the group members realising the life skills they currently have in order to continue their existence in an effective way, and to provide them to see their potential in dealing with psychosocial problems, being made stronger to cope with possible future problems, raising harmony within the elderly era.

Target: Group members will know the concept and the reasons for stress, will explain the styles of dealing with stressors, will know of the physiological and psychological changes that occur in the body in stressful

situations, will use life skills to deal with daily life struggles, will say what powers they potentially have that they can use to deal with stress, will realise the problems they have in dealing with creating harmony in the elderly era and will be able to put forward suggestions to solve these problems.

Techniques and Exercises Applied: My positives characteristics, my strengths/values

Session Content and Process:

- The aims and content of the session is explained to the group members.
- The group members are asked to share an event or situation in which they are proud of themselves and to put together a compliment towards themselves and are promoted to value themselves positively.
- Areas in which they may feel stress due to bodily and emotional changes that occur during the elderly era are discussed.
- They are promoted to be ready for possible stressful situations by realising the sources of stress that are found in this era and the physiological and psychological effects are discussed.
- Starting with an event that a volunteer group member lived through, the other members are asked to share their ways of coping with the same event and information on different coping methods (problem solving, social support, optimism, self-reliance etc.) are given.
- It is emphasised that everyone can go through similar events, and that reacting naturally to these events and understanding each other makes it easier.
- They are promoted to think about what they can do in the face of stress, perceiving themselves positively and how this perception affects their behaviour and realise their control over these situations.
- Effective coping methods that can be used in place of ineffective coping methods are explained to the group.
- Information on the importance of organising their lifestyle in the face of stressful experiences (sleeping pattern, diet etc.) and how they can organise these is given.
- Group members are promoted to discuss problems they live through the elderly era and to realise the harmony problems they deal with.
- Effective problem solving methods and suggestions for solutions for these problems are promoted and how they can use these skills in an effective manner is talked upon.
- The session is summarised, the members are asked for their feelings and thoughts.
- The session is ended by giving information about the subject of the next session.

8thSession

Subject: Raising the quality of life, evaluating spare time, taking advantage of opportunities.

Aim: Awareness of the importance of activities that are important in the aspect of their own expectations and cultural values for the group members to have a high quality of life in old age, learning skills for these activities or increasing skills, seeing the enjoyment in the areas of life that are appropriate to the criteria specified by the members, evaluating their quality of life and getting into action in order to increase their quality of life.

Target: Group members will subjectively evaluate their own quality of life within the sociocultural environment that they live in, will make a list of activities appropriate with themselves to give significance to their lives, will list the places and activities where they can spend their spare time in a beneficial way for them, will increase their family life enjoyment by reviewing the social and cultural characteristics, will determine activities

that can be done with family members, will explain the importance of increasing their quality of life, and will create positive expectations towards the future.

Techniques and Exercises Applied: Three fingers (18), 10 places 10 activities (8).

Session Content and Process:

-The group members are asked what they have done since the previous session.

-The aims and content of the session is explained to the group members.

-Group members partake in the warm-up game “three fingers”, the group members are asked to lift three fingers, the index fingers represents their favourite food, the middle finger represents the place they wish to go to the most, and the ring finger represents their favourite song, then the group members take it in turns to tell each other what their fingers represent. Then blank pages are given out to the group members and the “10 places 10 activities” activity is conducted. The elderly individuals are asked to write the places they can go and the things they can do in these places, they then explain these with their own memories. The goal here is to help the group members to define the places and the activities that they can do together in their spare time and to encourage them to get into action.

-The group members are asked to share past hobbies, travels, and experiences such as picnics and then are asked about their feelings. Thus, their connection to the past and the feeling of enjoyment of life is supported, the physical health, psychological state and social relationships of the individuals are discussed, and are hereby made to realise what kind of meaning this adds to their life in light of these discussions.

-The group members are talked to about how satisfied they are with their own physical, psychological and social functions and, according to their self-evaluation, how much this affects them.

-They are talked to about what they do about finding enjoyment of and significance of life and what they can do.

-In this duration, they are asked about how to sustain their thoughts on activities and efforts of being productive in the elderly era.

-The importance of sustaining any kind of brain training activities to not lose their mental skills, and that unused mental skills show weakening over time is explained. For this reason, they are asked what they do in their daily life and spare time and the importance of them using and sustaining these skills are explained.

-The group members are supported in choosing activities that fall in with their potentials. (For example; cooking, housework, shopping, budget, paying bills, regular newspapers, reading, solving puzzles, doing home reparation, knitting, lacework, playing cards, backgammon, playing bingo, painting, playing a musical instrument, keeping a diary, writing down memories, writing letters) The effects that occur on themselves by taking on the responsibility of doing these activities are discussed and the feeling that they still have a place in society while doing these is promoted.

-The session is summarised, the members are asked for their feelings and thoughts. -The session is ended by giving information about the subject of the next session.

9thSession

Subject: Ending and general evaluation.

Aim: Evaluation of the group process, bringing clarity to any missing subjects, promoting the feeling of the group members ending the group with positive feelings towards the group, promoting the realisation of the change they see within themselves.

Target: The group members will evaluate the group process, members will ask questions about misunderstood or things they think were left missing, members will express their gains that came out of the group, members will express their thoughts and feelings about the ending of the group.

Session Content and Process:

-The group members will be asked if they have any questions about the subjects that were undertaken during the process and any questions will be answered,

-Every group member will be asked to evaluate the process,

-They will be asked about their gains and what they feel about the ending of the process,

-Suggestions will be taken, the group will be ended after the group members share,

-All group members will be thanked for their contribution.

III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

It is expected that the elderly, through this program, will be able to overcome problems that they go through, and that they will be productive, self-dependent elderly individuals that will contribute to societal mental health. Moreover, the presentation of new alternative elderly services for nurses and a base for these services will be created.

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