

Innovations in Social Work Practice with Older Adults and Their Families

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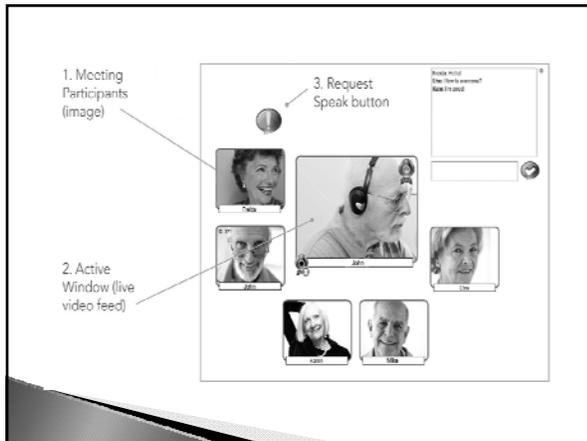
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Internet-based Interventions for
Family Caregivers of Persons with
Chronic Disease: A group
intervention using technology



The Caring for Others Website Program





• **Several feasibility and experimental studies with family caregivers of persons with chronic disease have shown that an Internet video conferencing format for providing support group interventions benefits caregiver physical and mental health.**

- Marziali, E., Damianakis, T., Donahue, P. (2006). Virtual support for family caregivers: theoretical framework, intervention model and outcome. *Journal of Technology in Human Service*, 24, 39–54.
- Marziali, E. (2006). Developing evidence for an internet-based psychotherapeutic group intervention. *Journal of Evidence Based Social Work*, 8, 149–166.
- Marziali, E. & Donahue, P. (2006). Caring for Others: Internet, video-conferencing group intervention for family caregivers of older adults with neurodegenerative disease. *The Gerontologist*, 46, 398–403.

Social Workers Experiences

- Damianakis, T., Climans, R. & Marziali, E. (2008). Social Workers' Experiences of Virtual Psychotherapeutic Caregivers Groups for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Stroke, Frontotemporal Dementia, and Traumatic Brain Injury. *Social Work with Groups*. 31(2), 99-116.
- A qualitative study of social work facilitators' online experiences

The provision of online psychotherapeutic support groups for family caregivers was an overall positive experience for the social work therapists

Specific Themes

- Needing to adapt to specific technology while engaging group members in process
- Absence of non-verbal behavioral cues except for central active window
- Despite technical manipulation of active window and turn-taking, group members bonded as in face-to-face groups

Specific Themes continued

- Satisfaction at being able to provide a service to clients in their homes
- Experience of therapeutic effectiveness in a technology-based service delivery environment

Social Worker Statements

- *"This modality can be highly effective and satisfying in meeting the needs of caregivers for support"*
- *"A valuable relational context could be created online"*
- *"An effective group experience can take place online"*



Challenges & Satisfactions Using Technology in the Delivery of Health Services

- Clients / patients unfamiliarity with the technology
- Health care provider's need to address client frustrations with technology
- Successful engagement with client despite technological barriers

Engagement in Online Group Process

Types of contact included:

- Recruitment
- Technical
- Emotional Support
- Specific Problems
- Reminders
- Referral to Other Services

Conclusion

- Training therapists to transition from in person to on line virtual psychotherapy requires a focus on balancing technological competency with clinical skills
- Equivalent outcomes are achievable

A Support Group for Child Survivors of the Holocaust



- Over one-and-a-half million children died in the Holocaust.
- The majority of children who survived were hidden in private home, hospitals, orphanages and convents.
- Child survivors were 18 years of age or less at the time of Liberation (in 1945).
- Today the eldest are in their late 70's and youngest in their mid-60's.

- Common themes**
- Identity
 - who am I?
 - fear, loss

- Heroism and resiliency
- Impact of aging
- Culturally sensitive care

- Fewer studies and less research done on child survivors
- Each has a unique story of pain and survival

Diverse Groups with Similar Outcomes

- Preventative/proactive approaches to community - based clients
- Meeting the needs of younger clients
- Groups have empowered members to make long lasting connections

Questions?	Discussion
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