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Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing

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The fountain of health initiative for optimal aging

Background: The Fountain of Health Initiative is a Canadian project offering evidence-based information on successful aging and mental health promotion. It includes 5 key healthy aging messages, and supports and evaluates mental health interventions by care providers in community and long term care settings.

Method: Educational tools including a website, an educational video, worksheets and booklets were provided to family doctors, nurse practitioners and other community mental health providers in Nova Scotia. A total of 74 clinicians received in person and tele-health education sessions about Fountain of Health (FoH) materials. Pre and post questionnaires assessed knowledge transfer. In total, 37 questionnaires were completed. Translation to practice to educate seniors in community and long term care settings was followed over 2 months. A further intervention to assess the impact of music therapy in nursing home settings is also in progress, with pre and post measures of mental health and behavior to be evaluated in 2016.

Results: It was found that clinicians' knowledge regarding mental health promotion improved following delivery of FoH education. Unpaired t-tests found significant differences between pre- and post-questionnaire mean scores ($p < 0.0001$) indicating highly effective knowledge transfer. Effect size using a Cohen's d found a correlation of 0.8. Follow up of over 2 months indicated good uptake and positive response from patients and clinicians alike. Results from the intervention with music in long term care will be available for discussion at the conference.

Biography

Beverley Cassidy is an Assistant Professor in Dalhousie University, Department of Psychiatry. Her academic interests in Geriatric Psychiatry include late life mood and anxiety disorders, the neurobiology of healthy aging, and the application of cognitive behavioral therapy in late life and resilience across the lifespan. She pursued her undergraduate degree in Neurobiology at Yale University, received her Psychiatric Training at McGill University, and completed 2 year fellowship at the University of Toronto with a focus on attachment, affect regulation and mood disorders. She has been actively involved in the Fountain of Health Initiative for Optimal Aging for the past five years, and currently spearheads a provincial effort to bring healthy aging tools to frontline clinicians in primary care settings to promote health behavior change in seniors. Currently she is supervising a resident research project on the feasibility of using the FOH Clinicians' Guide (Link: fountainofhealth.ca) in broad spectrum primary care and other settings to activate behavioral and attitude changes that foster healthier aging. She is part of the FOH App development team and is the leader of the Fountain of Health's National Speakers' Bureau, having presented on the initiative both provincially and internationally.

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