



Using the Occupation of Art to Improve Mental Health in Older Adults

Payton Sanders, OTD; Beth Barstow, PhD, OTR/L, SCLV, FAOTA
 Department of Occupational Therapy | University of Alabama at Birmingham
 Ben Fuller, OTR/L | Aspire Physical Recovery Center, LLC in Hoover, AL

Introduction

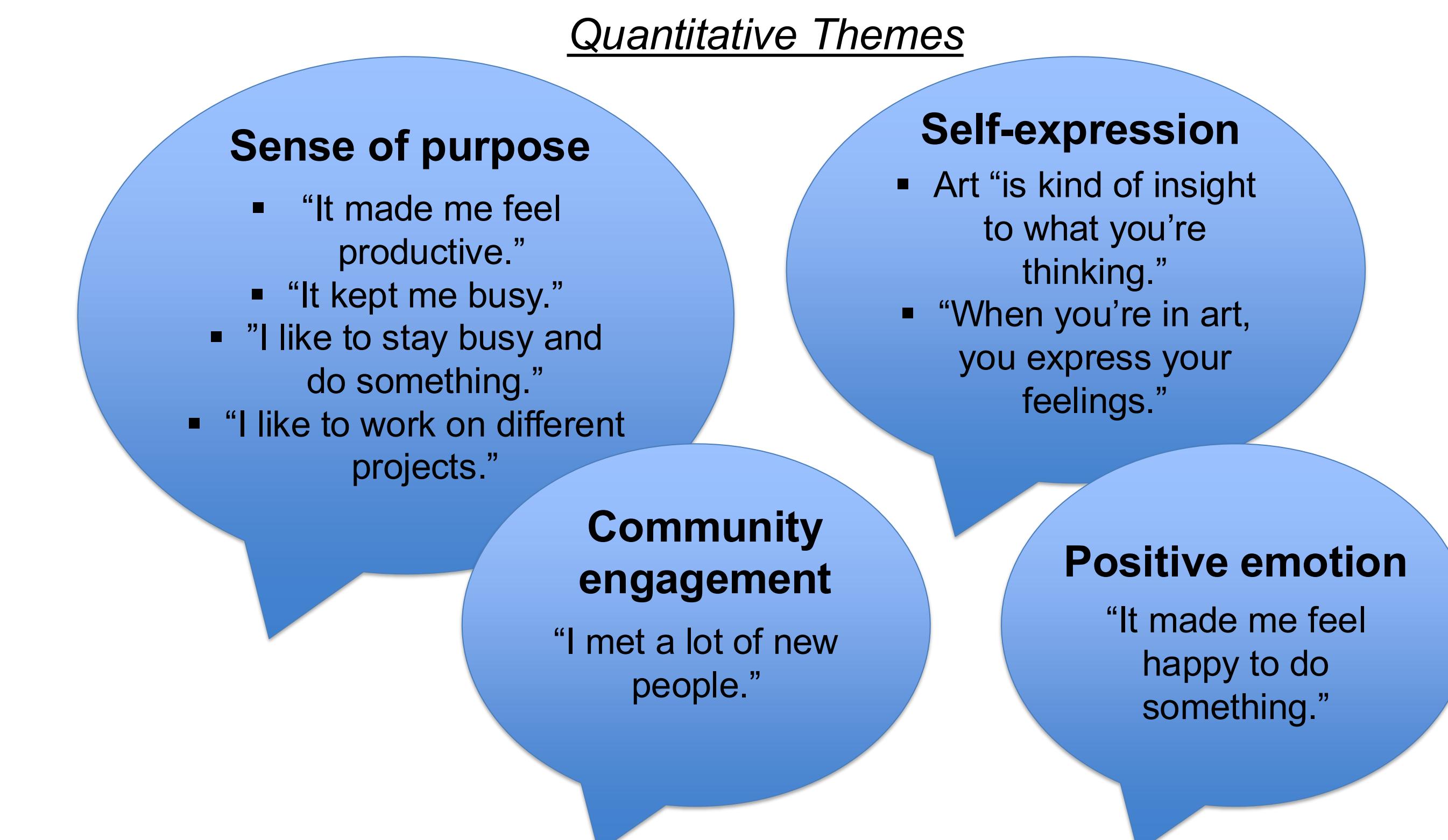
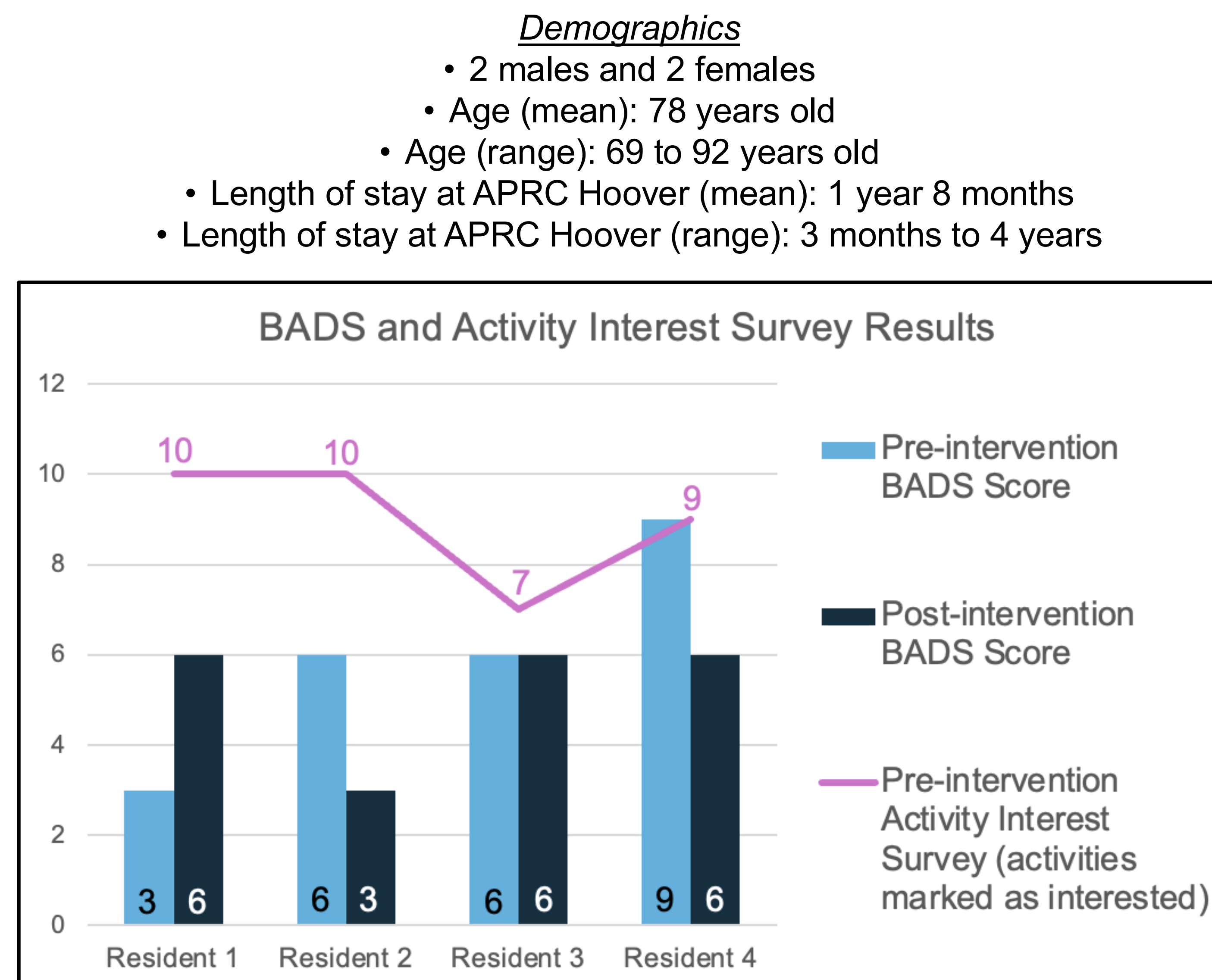
- Depression and anxiety are prevalent among long-term care (LTC) facility residents due to physical and/or cognitive decline, inability to live on their own, isolation, fear of relying on others to meet their needs, and shifts in routines and roles (Ciasca et al., 2018; Yao et al., 2019).
- Mental health must be addressed within this population (Ciasca et al., 2018).
- Research has shown that art can lessen mental health symptoms, enhance community engagement, facilitate a more positive environment, and easily be adapted to fit individual needs (Vaartio-Rajalin et al., 2021).
- Art is considered a leisure occupation because it is relaxing and rewarding, there is no pressure on performance, and it does not require extensive planning or commitment (AOTA, 2020).
- Art is currently not implemented in LTC facilities on a regular basis (Vaartio-Rajalin et al., 2021).

Purpose: To determine if engagement in weekly art groups affects the mental health of LTC residents

Methods

- Recruitment:**
 - Distributed flyers and spoke to residents face-to-face at Aspire Physical Recovery Center (APRC) in Hoover, AL
 - Convenience sampling (based on availability and interests)
 - 9 LTC residents expressed interest in study
- Data Collection**
 - Pre-intervention** (9 participants total)
 - Medical chart review
 - Activity Interest Survey
 - Brief Anxiety and Depression Scale (BADS)
 - Intervention** (4-7 residents each session; 4 consistent participants)
 - Art activities:** painting, making collages, sewing, baking cookies, crafts, coloring
 - Site:** Life enrichment room/dining hall at Aspire Hoover
 - Frequency:** 1 activity per week for 6 consecutive weeks (+ 1 make-up session)
 - Adaptations as needed
 - Post-intervention** (4 participants total)
 - BADS
 - 3 out of 4 completed a face-to-face semi-structured qualitative interview with open-ended questions
- Data Analysis**
 - BADS:** Descriptive statistics and paired t-test
 - Activity Interest Survey:** Descriptive statistics
 - Qualitative Interview:** Thematic analysis

Results



Discussion

Major Findings

- Improvements in overall quality of life and mental health among participants
- Positive participant experiences
- Several barriers limiting participation in art sessions within LTC settings
- Art is easily adaptable to meet a variety of needs
 - Ex: Step-by-step visual and verbal instructions, large utensils, pre-cut materials, hand over hand assistance, extended time

Limitations & Areas of Improvement

- Small sample size
- Decreased resident buy-in or interest
- Participant cognition, physical abilities, illness, and/or injury
- Staff shortage

Conclusion

Implications

- Incorporating leisure activities into future interventions
- Consistency is key
- Increased OT involvement in art activities

Future Research

- Increase amount of art sessions provided each week
- Create personalized art supply kits for residents to use in private rooms
- Research additional anxiety and depression screening tools
- Create information sheet about benefits of participating in art

References

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Contact info: Payton Sanders: sandersp@uab.edu