Effects of gerotranscendence support group on gerotranscendence perspective, depression, and life satisfaction of institutionalized elders

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Objective: The purpose of this research was to test the clinical use of the gerotranscendence (GT) theory and its influence on GT perspective, depression, and life satisfaction among a group of institutionalized elders.

Methods: An experimental study utilizing pre–post group design and random assignment of elders into intervention and control group was conducted. The intervention support group was implemented in the experimental group once a week for eight weeks for 60 min. Over the eight-week period, 35 subjects in the experimental group and 41 in the control group completed the study. Data were collected one week before and one week after the intervention for both groups. Instruments include the GT Scale, Geriatric Depression Scale short form, and Life Satisfaction scale. Data were analyzed by paired t-test, Wilcoxon, McNemar, and analysis of co-variance.

Results: Pre- and post-test scores on the GT perspective and life satisfaction were significantly increased (p=0.000) in the experimental group. The mean depression score of the experimental group showed a slight but not significant decrease (p=0.06). However, significant post-test differences were noted between groups in GT perspective, depression, and life satisfaction (p=0.000, 0.01, and 0.000).

Conclusion: The findings of this study suggest that after participating in a GT support group, institutionalized elders’ GT perspective and life satisfaction were enhanced, and depression reduced. The positive effects demonstrated by this study can be extended and applied to the clinical health promotion of institutionalized elders. Ongoing GT intervention is encouraged to promote mental and spiritual health among institutionalized elders.

Keywords: gerotranscendence; depression; life satisfaction