Evaluating Mindfulness on Loneliness in an Older Adult Population

Date: July 7, 2022
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 2:35 p.m.
Place: 204 SCCB

Abstract

Problem: Loneliness is a widespread public health concern and has negatively impacted mortality and health outcomes among older adults. This quality improvement project's purpose was to evaluate mindfulness on loneliness and quality of life among adults aged 65 years and older, participating in a weekly befriending socialization program.

Methods: A descriptive cohort design was utilized to assess loneliness pre-and post-implementation of a mindfulness telephone line over three months. A convenience sample of 22 older adults enrolled in a befriending socialization program was used. The Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice framework was applied to guide the implementation of a practice change and evaluate its impact on healthcare outcomes.

Results: Participation in mindfulness was independent of post-implementation perceived loneliness ($p = .697$) and quality of life ($p = .711$). There was no difference between the mean loneliness scores in the post-implementation screening among the mindfulness participation group and no participation group ($t = -0.04, p = .970$). The mindfulness participation group did not have a significant difference for the mean loneliness scores in the pre-implementation screening and post-implementation screening ($t = 0.79, p = .457$).

Implications for Practice: Mindfulness meditation may provide a positive impact on the older adult population. Telephone-based mindfulness meditations have the potential to reduce anxiety and stress while improving focus and sleep, as well as creating the daily habit of deep breathing and mindfulness. The daily activity of telephone-based mindfulness could supplement weekly befriending socialization programs for older adults.

Keywords: older adults, loneliness, mindfulness, meditation, telephone, befriending socialization programs, quality of life

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