Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Nursing Practice with an emphasis in Family Nurse Practitioner

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M.S. Nursing, Maryville University, 2014
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Targeting Loneliness in Older Adults with Weekly Socialization

Date: November 13th, 2023
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract
Problem: Loneliness related to social isolation among the older adult population has become an increasing health concern with few interventions available for the general population. Loneliness has been directly associated with depression, poorer physical health outcomes, and overall quality of life.

Methods: The purpose of this study is to evaluate loneliness in the older adult population residing in a senior living community in an urban area in Missouri. Weekly one-on-one socialization, ranging from 45-60 minutes, will be implemented over 6 weeks, with pre and post-intervention screening for loneliness with the 28-item Visit-A-Bit (VAB) screening tool. Approval was received by both VNA and the developer of the VAB program and screening tool, with the aim of improving the quality of life in this older adult population and the development of future similar programs.

Results: No difference in reported loneliness was observed utilizing the Visit-A-Bit questionnaire, therefore statistical analysis, the t-test, could not be run. None of the participants reported feeling lonely living in the senior living community. There were however varied reports of feelings of emptiness and quality of life, though no changes were reported post-intervention. Nursing students utilized for the intervention reported an increase in insight into the needs of this population and the benefit of providing more compassionate care moving forward in their nursing careers.

Implications for Practice: Socialization with older adults can positively impact nursing students and potentially improve their patient outcomes. Socialization programs could be used to not only enhance the quality of life for the older adult population but also improve overall healthcare outcomes.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Elise Schaller, DNP, MHA, APRN, CPNP-PC Chairperson
Sheila Grigsby, PhD, RN, MPH, APHN-BC Committee Faculty Member
Melissia Robinson, MA Committee Faculty Member