

Project Ludus

07-30

Single-Year

Yu Shunhang (34) 4A1(L)

Zong Sheng Hao (33) 4S2

Joshua Choo (7) 4P1

Huang Yuxuan (7) 4A3

Wang Hanchen (28) 4A2

Section I: Overview

1. Area of Concern

According to the Department of Statistics, 41,200 Singaporeans above the age of 65 lived alone in 2015, this figure is estimated to double to more than 83,000 by 2030. When the elderly live alone and do not have company, it is inevitable that they feel lonely and do not enjoy their silver years. As one ages, their mental and physical abilities will also deteriorate naturally. According to Adelphi Psych Medicine Clinic, if an elderly person needs someone to help them with their basic needs due to mental or physical deterioration, they may feel that they're a burden to others. Believing that they're no longer useful, an elderly person may lose their sense of self-worth and sink into depression. This can cause severe repercussions to their psychological health, which impacts their health mentally and physically. With an ageing population, more elderly would be negatively affected and therefore, their inability to live in happiness is an area of concern.

2. Challenges Identified

Some challenges the elderly faced include:

- Lack of activities at the centre caused life to be boring for the seniors
- Seniors had troubles accepting their cognitive decline
- Seniors did not really have the opportunity to interact with those outside of the centre. Their pattern of life became fixed which made their lives boring and uneventful.

Challenges we faced due to COVID-19:

- We had to find ways to make our virtual sessions engaging since we could not carry out our activities face to face with the elderly due to COVID-19.
- Due to the staffing shortages caused by COVID-19, there was poor communication between the beneficiary and us initially. We had a limited view of the plight of the elderly and had trouble coming up with solutions.
- Many of the elderly were partially visually impaired. Thus, we had to make sure the elderly could clearly see what we were doing through video conferencing.

3. Underlying Problem

Given the current situation shows that the elderly face low self-efficacy, how might we increase the self efficacy of elderly at Tembusu Senior Activity Centre and Tembusu Eldercare Centre such that they are more confident in themselves and can face life with more positivity, and ultimately become happier in their silver years?

4. Plan of Action

Through our emails and video calls with the beneficiary, we were able to get a rough idea of the profiles of the elderly. We came up activities that target 3 key areas with the aim of increasing their happiness:

1. Cognitive Skills
2. Creativity
3. Physical Ability

To improve cognitive skills of the elderly, we included sudoku puzzles to help stimulate the brain of the elderly. We hope our games can not only improve their cognitive ability, but also enable them to have fun and enjoy the process and success of completing such puzzles, thereby realising their self worth and becoming happier.

To improve their creativity, we came up with arts and craft activities and competitions, such as the making of photo frames and puppets. We taught them the basics of making such structures. We then held a mini “competition” to challenge them to design it as creatively as possible. At the end, we provided everyone with prizes so that no one was left out. The prizes gave the elderly an incentive to exercise their creativity. The sense of satisfaction of completing the activities also boosted the elderly’s self-efficacy and happiness levels.

Finally, we planned exercise routines to improve the elderly’s physical well-being. Most of the activities can be carried out whilst seated, therefore ensuring that our package can benefit the

vast majority of elderly. Exercising is known to release endorphins which increases happiness levels in the elderly.

We also prepared tutorial videos narrated in both English and Chinese so that the beneficiary can use them in future.

Section II: Implementation of Action Plan

1. Actions and Outcomes to date

Month	Actions
January	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formed project group 2. Research phase 3. Discussion with Mentor for possible ideas and what to expect
February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Found beneficiary 2. Reached out to beneficiary 3. Identify underlying problems 4. Continuation of Research phase
March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conducting needs analysis (no response due to closure of eldercare centres as community cases rise) 2. Started Planning phase 3. Brainstorming sessions
April (CB)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued planning phase due to sudden announcement of circuit breaker 2. Discussion with Mentor on changes needed to be made
May (CB)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compiling of activities that will be carried out
June (CB)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of Infographics

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Gathered Preliminary feedback for activities carried out 3. Meeting with person-in-charge to understand profiles of elderly
July	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tweaked resources due to certain limitations of the elderly 2. Completion of video resources 3. Prepared arts and crafts materials
August	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interaction sessions with elderly

*CB = circuit-breaker

Section III: Project Outcomes

1. Accomplishments

To date, we have successfully carried out **2 full sessions** with our beneficiary and have interacted with at least **20 elderly**. Additionally, we received feedback from the centre staff that the sessions were **engaging and meaningful**. The elderly really enjoyed our interaction sessions as they were perceivably more active and cheerful as time went on which is one of our criteria for measuring project engagement and success. We have future sessions planned out with the centre staff and we will be carrying them out to further realise our goals.

2. Reflection

Through this project, we were able to better understand the lives of the elderly and sympathise with them. We learnt to be grateful for still being able to spend time with our loved ones as a number of seniors at the centre have lost their loved ones and lead lonely lives at home, thus they would have to come down to the centre to keep them entertained. We also learnt to be more patient and flexible in dealing with things as we faced many issues that we did not think of when carrying out the activities virtually, which we had to settle on the spot. (For example, the elderly sometimes were unable to clearly see what we were teaching them for arts and crafts activities so we had to use another device to show them what we were doing.)

3. Scope of Impact

The elderly at the Tembusu eldercare centre and the Tembusu Senior Activity Centre have found the sessions very enriching towards their normal life as it gives them a different change in their normal routine of life. Through the activities carried out with the elderly, they are more entertained and lead a more positive and active lifestyle. They also have gradually realised their self worth after being able to complete simple arts and crafts activities we have planned for them, thus solving our underlying problem.

References:

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