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Spring 4-13-2020

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Recommended Citation

Phillips, Baylie; Leazer, Nathan; Tracy, Ashley; and Lovell, Elyse, "Intergenerational Socialization: Assessing Mindfulness, Anxiety and Depression While Painting With Water Colors" (2020). *TECHxpo*. 17.
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Intergenerational Socialization: Assessing Mindfulness, Anxiety and Depression While Painting With Water Colors

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ABSTRACT

The overall intent of this mixed methods study was to assess intergenerational socialization while measuring elders' health and well-being in association with depression, anxiety and mindfulness assessments while painting with watercolors. Undergraduate-researchers interviewed elders, administered quantitative assessments before and after painting together with watercolors. The qualitative results showed health and well-being through a primary theme of resilience and underlying themes of acceptance combined with secondary themes of family and friends, parenting (children), personal accomplishments, hobbies and home. Elders' results showed positive changes in depression, anxiety and mindfulness, and undergraduate researchers were somewhat in awe of the richness of elders' responses relating to resilience and acceptance.

INTRODUCTION/LITERATURE

Intergenerational sharing between undergraduates and older adults has shown enhanced learning for both generations with improved socialization, self-esteem, and engagement (Tam, 2014). Community partnerships with elders and college students participating in multigenerational learning has suggested positive partnership experiences (Dauenhauer, Steitz, & Cochran, 2016).

Intergenerational socialization in association with anxiety, depression, and memory recall is a way to quantify behavioral health needs of elders. The Alzheimer's foundation is supporting art for memory recall, and more specifically watercolor paintings. In this study, elders' cognition was assessed while participating in watercolor painting with intergenerational socialization.



METHODS

This was a mixed methods study. Three quantitative assessments: Revised Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale, Geriatric Depression Scale: Short Form, and The Geriatric Anxiety Scale Version 2.0, were used for pre and post assessments. Qualitative analysis included recorded interviews (N=8) about elders' lived experiences and participation in watercolor painting between elders and undergraduate researchers.

RESULTS

The main theme was **resilience** with the underlying theme of **acceptance**. In addition secondary themes: **family and friends, kids and accomplishments, hobbies, and home**.

Resilience, in relation to these interviews, is the ability for the interviewees to recuperate after a difficult obstacle came into their paths. For example, interviewee 1 claimed, "I think I could take it. I just say 'who gave you the power to think you know all of this stuff, you don't. That's your asshole speaking because your mouth knows better.'" In terms of resilience, two interviewees stated, "I roll with the punches" and "I just roll with the punches," which seems to be a common saying with this age group. One interviewee said, "Most of the time you have to face the music."

Acceptance, was the ability for the interviewee to come to terms with the things they have had to deal with throughout their lives. A common example claimed by interviewee 1, "But it's natural to grow old as it is to be born, just a natural and for the most part we don't bite, we don't kick, we don't scream, for the most part." This quote specifically targets the ageism most people have. The acceptance of aging seemed to be a common subtheme as well. In addition, "As long as you try, no matter where you are, you're going to run into bumps in the road, you just have to keep trying." This quote ties in both acceptance and resilience. Finally, interviewer 3

asked interviewee 3: "Do you think it is wonderful to be alive now?" with the reply of "Boy, do I ever." This also was a common subtheme of acceptance. Another interviewee said, "I was in good health then I had those two strokes, and I ended up here. Which happens to a lot of people. So yeah, it depends on the situation with a lot of those questions now, because I'd much rather be home as here. But as long as that's the way it worked out then that's what I'll accept and I'll go on with it." Many of the interviewees were satisfied with their lives and were glad to be alive.

Family and friends (kids and accomplishments) were heavily present throughout each interview. Each interview involved a topic of discussion involving loved ones. A subtheme within this category was kids and their accomplishments. Many of the interviewees had obvious joy when talking about their family and friends. For example, interviewee 4 said, "God we laughed at this business and joked and went out and did stuff you know, walked on the jetty and oh it was great." It was a common theme for these participants to talk about their fondest memories containing family or friends. One interviewee said, "I come up every night for dinner uh to be among my friends." Likewise, "the town kids would say "don't you get bored out there" but we didn't know what bored meant. When we would get antsy our mother would send us to the foothills right outside our doorstep and we would just get out there and pick wildflowers we were never bored." Similarly, "So my children are probably the best thing I ever did and caring for my folks I think, you know, elderly people, and then my grandchildren." Additionally, "Accomplishments, well my two daughters, that was an accomplishment because one of them has a mouth the size of mine and everything was 'Okay. Fine. Whatever.' And the bedroom door would slam." Throughout most interviews, their children were their greatest accomplishments. Finally, "You just hope that they are happy, contented, they apply and push forth the effort to apply themselves. You always want nothing but the best for your kids, and that might not come easy." Another said, "A couple things is when

my kids have grown up to be the gentlemen they are and know that they're supposed to act like gentlemen. They're all smart. They must take after their dad's side." It was prevalent the interviewees' joy came from raising their family.

Hobbies (home) were described by participants as they enjoyed various forms of art or the outdoors in their life. Some of their hobbies included: "Oh, I just love to be outdoors. I used to fish and everything with the kids", "I teach pie crust to children", "I delivered all the baby lambs", "Tapestry, sewing, crocheting, design. I design cloths", and "I like bingo and I like more games, games we play here at the springs. It's the fact that I am with everybody that pleases me." Another one is "Okay so hunting, fishing, I haven't hunted a lot but I love to shoot my own game, water skiing, board surfing, you get

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results suggest painting with watercolors may reduce stress / anxiety and increase mindfulness in older adults. Additional research with a larger sample size could be beneficial for the quantitative analyses and enhancement of themes.

