

Developing an intervention to enhance social connectedness and improve quality of life for people with dementia in long-term care

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Funder

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Canada

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Developing an intervention to enhance social connectedness and improve quality of life for people with dementia in long-term care

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The project/programme is most relevant to:

Alzheimer's disease & other dementias

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Research Abstract

According to people with dementia, feeling connected impacts quality of life. Feeling connected occurs when people experience kindness, closeness, love, or reciprocity in their relationships. In contrast, twenty percent of long-term care residents report conflict or display aggression with others. Feeling connected is more than simple contact; it speaks to the quality and meaning of relationships from the perspective of the person with dementia. Interventions to improve these perceived connections have not been developed for people with dementia, and this study will begin to address this knowledge gap. The purpose of this study is to design and pilot test an intervention to promote perceived connections and improve quality of life for people with mild and moderate dementia in long-term care. First, a literature review will identify promising interventions used in other populations, and describe how and why these interventions work in different contexts. Second, focus groups with people with dementia, their family members, and caregivers will capture their perspectives on the determinants and outcomes of perceived connections for people with dementia. Focus group participants will also assess the promising interventions from the literature review, and discuss their own personal practices to enhance people with dementia's perceived connections. An intervention protocol will be developed following analysis of the focus group data. Third, a pilot study will assess whether the intervention and study procedures are feasible and acceptable for use with people with mild and moderate dementia in actual long-term care practice. Outcome data on perceived connections, quality of life, and depressive symptoms will be collected to assess initial trends. This work forms the foundation for a future study to test whether the intervention to promote perceived connections is effective and improves quality of life for people with mild and moderate dementia in long-term care.

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