

Relationship between VOCA Intervention and Empowerment Perceived by Elderly Clients

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ABSTRACT

“Empowering People to Build Better Lives” is the focus mission statement of Partnership for Families, Children and Adults, which is a private, non-profit agency that serves elderly and disabled clients in the Hamilton County area with VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) social services. Elder abuse rates are high according to research with 3 to 5 percent of older people being abused. The rate is even higher, about 13 percent, among social service community-based cases (Reis, 2000). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effects of VOCA intervention in the lives of elderly adults to determine if they perceive themselves as living more empowered and satisfied lives.

Using the secondary data from of the Client Survey for Elderly and Disabled Adults, which includes 12 questions, data will be collected over a three-month period by a senior-level BSW student from UTC. Secondary data of demographic information will also be collected during the same three-month period. Stratified sampling is to be used to compare subgroups of male and female older adults who have used or are presently using VOCA services.

Sample size desired will be 40-50 case files from a sampling frame of 160; therefore, systematic sampling methods will be used to select every 4th case. Data collected will be entered into SPSS, and descriptive statistics will be run to check for data distribution and skewness. For both research questions, secondary data from the Client Survey for Elderly and Disable Adults and demographic information will be summed to create a total score using a code book prepared to measure empowerment and improved life satisfaction perceived by the elderly and disabled clients served by the Elderly Services of Partnership for Families, Children and Adults.

Frequencies will then be run to determine range of scores, mean scores, and standard deviations. T-tests will be run to look for differences between the groups. A correlation analysis will be run to examine relationships between the VOCA client survey and practicum experience of intervention and empowerment variables.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLING FRAME

Elderly and Disabled Adults, Victims of Crime Act Program (VOCA), as well as demographic information from VOCA client case files, age 50 and above. Sample size desired will be 40-50 case files from a sampling frame of 160; therefore, systematic sampling methods will be used to select every 4th case.

DESCRIPTION OF METHODS TO SELECT STUDY SAMPLE

Secondary data is desired from the Client Survey for Elderly and Disabled Adults, Victims of Crime Act Program (VOCA), as well as demographic information from VOCA client case files, age 50 and above. Stratified sampling is to be used to compare subgroups of male and female older adults who have used or are presently using VOCA services, and a comparison of diversity of ethnicity will be researched using stratified sampling.



PURPOSE/RATIONALE

Elder abuse rates are high according to research with 3 to 5 percent of older people being abused. The rate is even higher, about 13 percent, among social service community-based cases (Reis, 2000). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effects of VOCA intervention in the lives of elderly adults to determine if they perceive themselves as living more empowered and satisfied lives.

STUDY PROCEDURES FORIMPLEMENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS STEPS

Descriptive statistics will be run to check for data distribution and skewness. For both research questions, secondary data will be summed to create a total score. Frequencies will then be run to determine range of scores, mean scores, and standard deviations. T-tests will be run to look for differences between the groups. A correlation analysis will be run to examine relationships between the VOCA client survey and practical experience of intervention and empowerment variables.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between VOCA social service intervention and the perception of older adults living more satisfied lives?
2. What is the relationship between VOCA social service intervention and older adults being more empowered to act on their own behalf?

RESULTS

A total of 50 cases of elder abuse were identified from secondary data. Of the total sample (N=50), 26 percent of the participants reported that their age ranged from 50 to 60 years old; 28 percent of the participants reported that their age ranged from 61 to 70 years old; 30 percent of the participants reported their age as between 71 and 80 years old; and 16 percent reported their age ranged from 81 to 90 years old.

Results revealed that 74 percent of the overall sample (N=50) strongly agreed that they were more satisfied with their lives after VOCA intervention of social services while 26 percent of participants agreed. No significant difference was found ($t(48) = .763, p > .05$). The mean scores of Caucasian participants ($M=1.23, SD= .488$).

When reviewing question two 54 percent of clients strongly agreed that they could make better choices after receiving social services from the Elderly Services VOCA program at Partnership for Families, Children and Adults. Further, 38 percent agreed that they could make better choices while eight percent reported that they were neutral No significant difference was found ($t(48) = -.702, p > .05$).

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to research for results of the empowerment theory used at Partnership. For question one 74 percent of the overall sample voiced that they were strongly satisfied with VOCA services while 26 percent agreed. To answer question two 54 percent of the clients surveyed strongly agreed that they could make better choices after VOCA intervention; 38 percent agreed and eight percent were neutral. Literature revealed that there is very little information about VOCA services. There was also a lack of comparison to other agencies and sample demographics do not include the gay and lesbian population.

FIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. Social workers are to always consider cultural differences when working with VOCA clients.
2. Empowerment of older adults to make decisions on their own is preferred.
3. Social workers should have knowledge of social service resources to help empower clients.
4. Social workers will help clients establish goals and be supportive in helping them reach the goals set.
5. Social workers should participate in continuing education classes concerning elder abuse, the aging process, and problem-solving techniques.