

Final Report - Teasdale 2000

Small Grants Program for Clinical Educators Final Report

Date: November 12, 2000

Title: Building Coping Skills in Caregivers of Older Persons Exhibiting Behavior Disturbances

Principal Educator: Thomas A. Teasdale, Dr.P.H.

I. Summary of education program (no more than 150 words describing intervention, number of participants, and measured outcome):

MIRECC funds were used to purchase a digital video camera and to reimburse simulated patients (actors). The equipment and actors were utilized to design a CD-ROM based self-instructional tool designed to assist caregivers recognize and adopt good coping strategies. The actors were recruited, scripted, and filmed portraying typical interactions between a person with dementia and their caregiver. Maladaptive, adaptive, and preventive episodes were filmed. The CD-ROM is designed for individual use or in a group session format. An individual caregiver using their own or a facility's PC equipment can read, hear and watch the instructional material at their own pace. Alternatively, the material can be used to stimulate discussion in a group setting led by a facilitator. Collaboration between Geriatrics (Extended Care), Psychology, the Houston HSR&D Field Station, and Baylor College of Medicine has provided informal evaluation. Formal evaluation with field testing now needs to be performed prior to wide distribution.

II. Describe the intervention:

The impact of this educational intervention to train caregivers of demented persons remains unknown. It is known that a large proportion of caregivers suffer emotional and physical burn-out from the stress of their caregiving responsibilities. It is also thought that with support and appropriately managed stress, the efforts of successful caregivers results in an average of one additional year of community residence for demented persons. Given the high costs of institutional support for cognitively impaired veterans, the putative benefits of training materials such as this CD remain encouraging.

III. Future application of this intervention:

This application now needs to be field tested and distributed. While it is technically ready for distribution, the benefits of field testing, evaluation and revision (where indicated) cannot be understated. A follow-up MIRECC small grants program proposal is being submitted to accomplish this next step.

IV. Signatures:

Principal Educator: _____

Service Director: _____