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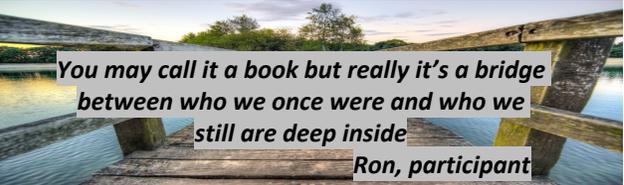
A digital life story book activity for older people with memory difficulties

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Background

- A range of life story activities have been implemented for people suffering from memory decline. Based on the idea that maintaining a core set of significant personal memories is crucial for maintaining a sense of self (e.g., Subramaniam, Lai & Kayser-Jones, 2004; Woods, 2012).
- Persons facing decline may maintain long-term personal memories but require significant external cueing (Kirk & Berntsen, 2018).
- Digital technology offers cueing of important life story memories in vivid, interactive ways.
- The current study investigates a digital life story book intervention, using an evidence-based memory interview for persons with memory difficulties.



*You may call it a book but really it's a bridge
between who we once were and who we
still are deep inside*
Ron, participant

Specific aims

Those in the Life Story Book condition will, at follow-up, report :

- 1) More positive self-functioning (clarity, esteem, continuity) compared to wait-list control.
- 2) Improved memory quality and significance of the selected memories in book.
- 3) Positive evaluations of the activity in terms of sense of self, and life, and satisfaction with participating.

Methods

Participants

Inclusion criteria: Diagnosis of mild to moderate dementia/Alzheimer's Disease, and/or, a score < 33 on TICS and/or score of ≤ 11 on TICS-MOD (working & short-term memory) . TICS-MOD range = 0 – 11 .

N = 49 older adults with memory difficulties;

33 Females, 16 Males; Age: $M = 76.12$, $SD = 9.262$, Range = 58-100
83.7% White, 12.2% African American, 2% Asian American, 2% Other

Recruitment and Compensation

Listserve, emails to assisted living facilities, retirement communities, and social media across the US. \$60 for completion; \$30 for partial completion.

Measures

Self-report assessment: Self-concept clarity (Campbell et al., 1996), Self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), Self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2015), memory quality (Rubin & Siegler, 2004), four feedback questions on the book activity.

Procedure and Measures (online)

Initial screening Baseline Two weeks Follow-up



Check inclusion criteria

Random assign to condition:
LIFE STORY BOOK
WAIT-LIST CONTROL

Self-report:
Self-concept clarity
Self-esteem
Self-continuity

Memory Quality Q
BOOK interview

LIFE STORY BOOK:
Review life story book for two weeks

CONTROL:
No activity

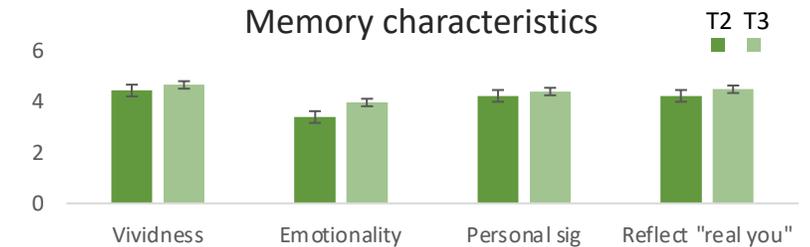
Self-report:
Self-concept clarity
Self-esteem
Self-continuity

Memory quality Q
Evaluate BOOK activity
Several Q, 5-point scales

Results

Aim 1. Participants in the life story book condition did not increase self-functioning compared to control group.

Aim 2. Participants in the life story condition showed increase from baseline to follow-up in memory characteristics $t(22) = -2.39$, $p = .026$:



Aim 3. Participants positively evaluated the activity. They had:

- strengthened sense of being the same person as always (4.4/5),
- realized how rich and varied their life has been (4.5/5),
- had increased acceptance and understanding of self (4.0/5),
- high satisfaction with having participated in activity (4.8/5)

Discussion

Though standard scales of self-functioning showed no improvement compared to a control, participants reported that doing the Life Story Book activity had positive implications for views of self and life. They also reported that the BOOK memories had been 'reinforced' and were more vivid, emotional, significant.

- In future, measurement style and sensitivity to change will be of major concern in evaluating life story interventions.
- Duration and intensity of the intervention may also need to be adjusted, though compliance with longer-term 'rehearsal' of life story books may not be feasible.