

Older adults' experiences of feasibility and involvement in the intervention reablement in residential aged care (Re-RAC)

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Objective

The aim of this study was to explore residents' experiences of reablement in residential aged care facilities.

Key message

Re-RAC is a feasible, person-centered intervention in residential aged care, with therapeutic alliance and staff support as key enablers.

Introduction

Older adults in Residential Aged Care (RAC) facilities are at special risk of decreased autonomy and opportunities to decide on personally meaningful activities, which may lead to a passive life and low well-being. Therefore, when examining the feasibility of Re-RAC in this setting, it was of particular importance to explore the participants experiences.

The Re-RAC intervention

- Reablement intervention
- In RAC Facilities

Study setting

- RAC Facility
- Middle-sized municipality
- Sweden



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Methods

Participants experiences of the Re-RAC intervention were collected through individual semi-structured interviews and analysed with deductive manifest content analysis according to Elo and Kyngäs approach (2008).

Results

Six older adults, 82 to 92 years old, participated. The analysis resulted in three categories.



- 1) **Experiences related to personal goals;** While the personal goal provided reasons to practice, participants could have difficulty rating their changed capability on a scale in relation to the goal at follow-up.



- 2) **Experiences of the support provided to perform the intervention;** Repeated feedback was important, linking the participants' efforts to their goal, maintaining motivation and establishing partnership with staff.



- 3) **Personal reflections on the outcomes;** participants reported increased engagement and perceived improvements in their capability to use their abilities effectively.

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Conclusions/ Contribution to the Occupational Therapy profession

- Re-RAC was experienced as feasible within the context of a Swedish residential aged care facility.
- Residents' perspectives provide valuable guidance for refining intervention procedures.
- Adequate and ongoing staff support is essential for successful implementation of Re-RAC.
- Establishing and maintaining a therapeutic alliance between residents and staff is fundamental throughout all stages of Re-RAC delivery.
- The findings underscore the importance of an occupational therapy-informed approach in the implementation of Re-RAC.

Future directions

Future work will focus on refining the Re-RAC procedures and evaluating its effectiveness and implementation in a larger sample of older adults in residential aged care facilities.

References

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