

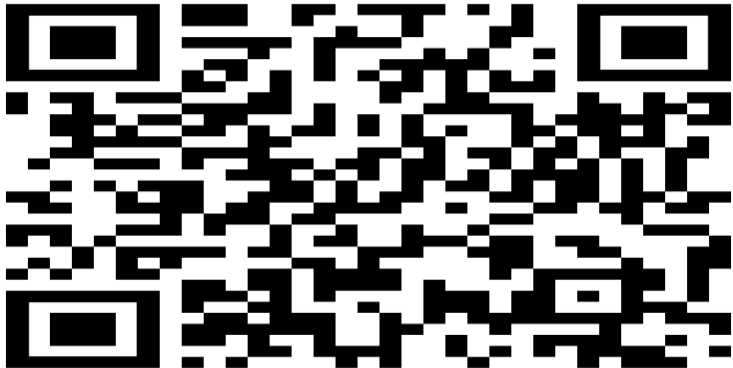
“I Was Able To Cope Because I Had Hope”:
Intergenerational Reminiscence
and Digital Storytelling

P-0955

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KEY TAKEAWAY :

- Intergenerational reminiscence with digital storytelling offers an innovative approach to supporting resilience and emotional well-being for persons living with dementia.

INTRODUCTION	METHODS	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS	REFERENCES
• Most persons living with dementia (PLWD) in the United States often reside in the community alone, increasing the risk of social isolation and loneliness linked to poorer health outcomes, lower quality of life, and reduced well-being.¹⁻³ • Reminiscence work with PLWD is viewed as a psychosocial intervention with a credible evidence base.⁴ • Research suggests that reminiscence combined with an intergenerational approach may yield important social and mental health benefits for young and older adults.⁷ • Research highlights the benefits of using digital storytelling (DST) with PLWD.⁵ • Research on intergenerational DST, which combines DST and intergenerational programs, reported positive outcomes including reciprocal relationships, empathy, connection, and confronting ageism.⁶ • However, few studies combined a reminiscence approach and DST or intergenerational DST.	• To address growing concerns about loneliness and diminished well-being among PLWD, an intergenerational reminiscence and DST project paired homebound PLWD with young adult college students for weekly telephone conversations over 10 weeks. • The study used a randomized controlled trial (RCT) (N = 64 dyads) to evaluate the reminiscence-based intergenerational intervention.⁷ • The overarching framework for the study was continuity theory,⁸ which posits that reminiscence may support individuals in adjusting to and coping with life changes. • Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven PLWD in the intervention group, with each interview lasting 45-60 minutes. • Interviews were transcribed verbatim and independently coded by two reviewers, with themes generated following Braun and Clarke’s six steps for thematic analysis.⁹	Four key themes: • (1) Intergenerational connection as a source of validation, emphasizing the importance of being listened to in a respectful, nonjudgmental space: <i>“It was refreshing to talk with a young person that actually listened. People don’t take the time anymore to listen.”</i> • (2) Reduction of loneliness and enhancement of emotional well-being, characterized by feelings of decreased isolation, improved mood, and joy in sharing stories that inspire young people: <i>“She brightens my day when she calls and makes me feel more positive than negative.”</i> • (3) Reflection, storytelling, and meaning-making, supporting gratitude and insight about the complexities of life: <i>“it really did cause me to reflect and see how fortunate and how blessed I am.”</i> • and (4) Resilience and legacy through sharing wisdom, reflecting pride in personal stories, and overcoming challenges: <i>“I was able to cope because I had hope.”</i>	• This intergenerational reminiscence and DST program shows promise in fostering social connection, reducing loneliness, and improving emotional well-being among PLWD. • Contributing life lessons to younger generations provides a sense of meaning and comfort for PLWD. • Revisiting memories and moments of perseverance in the face of past challenges highlights strengths and positive coping. • Themes of reflection, resilience, and legacy align with continuity theory, supporting identity preservation amid cognitive change and the life transitions that take place on the AD/ADRD journey. • Findings demonstrate the the feasibility of delivering non-pharmacological interventions with trained volunteers through accessible formats (e.g., telephone-based), increasing the potential for broader dissemination across diverse populations and settings.	 The study was funded by the Retirement Research Foundation for Aging (2020125). Thank you to our community partner, Meals On Wheels of Tarrant County, Texas. CONTACT Email: lingxu@uta.edu noellefields@uta.edu ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION 