

Pre-Loss Grief Support (PLGS) for Dementia Caregivers: Results from a National Longitudinal Intervention Study

Introduction:

- Dementia family caregivers often experience grief prior to the death of the person living with dementia (PLWD)
- Dementia caregivers are at a higher risk for Prolonged Grief Disorder
- Few interventions address grief before the death happens
- We developed a 10 session Pre-loss group support (PLGS) model designed to support caregivers before the death

Methods:

- We designed a national longitudinal intervention study
- We trained agency social workers across the United States to facilitate these groups in their agencies
- Family caregivers of PLWD were invited to participate in groups

Intervention:

- 10 session structured PLGS support group
- Focused on grief education, coping skills, meaning making, and peer support

Assessment:

- Participants completed assessments at 5 time points: baseline (week 1), midpoint (week 5), end of intervention (week 10), and follow ups at weeks 15 and 20
- Outcome measures included the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ), Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD), and Inventory of Complicated Grief (ICG)

Results:

Depression (PHQ-2)

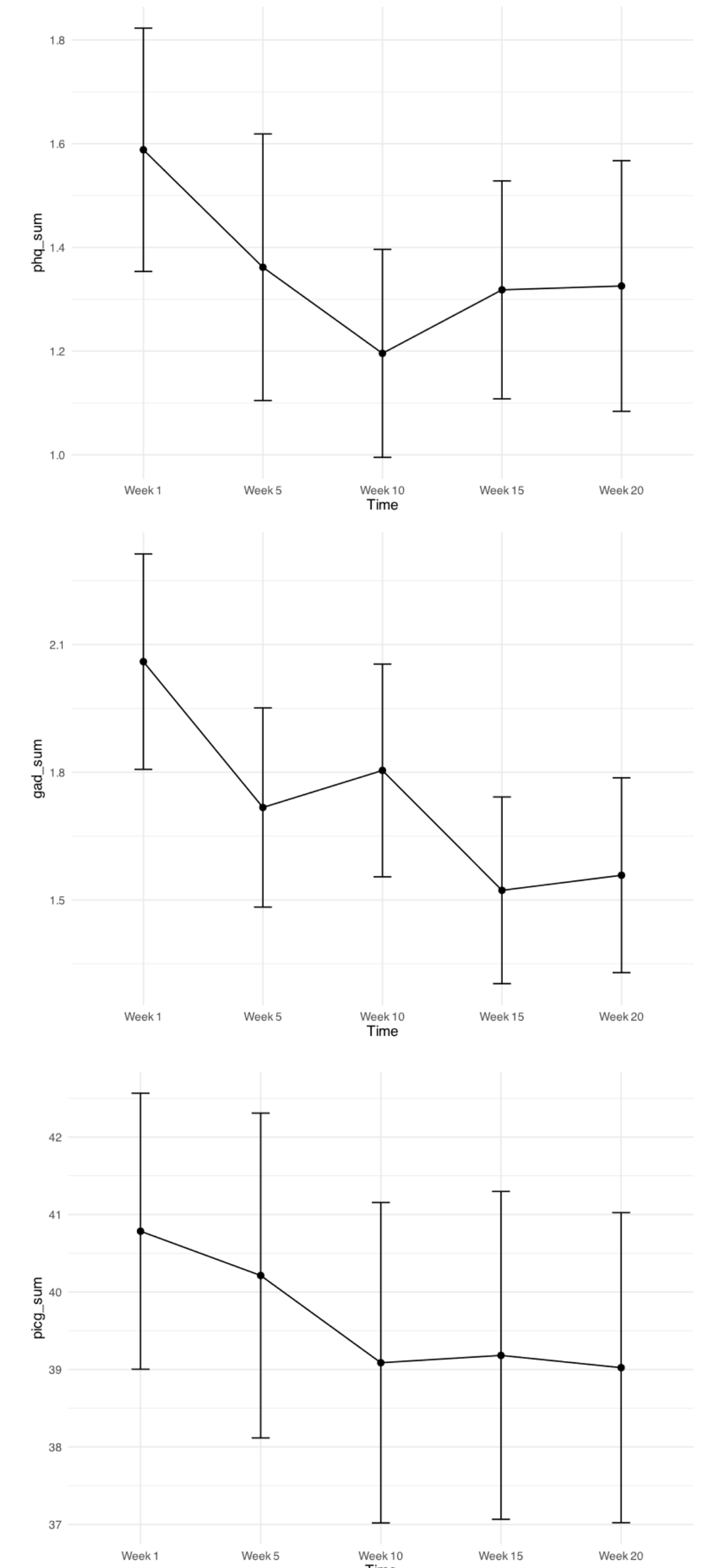
Significant reduction at week 10
($p=.037$)

Anxiety (GAD-2)

Significant reduction at week 15
($p=.037$)

Grief (ICG)

No statistically significant change, but trend toward lower grief scores at week 10



Conclusion:

- PLGS shows promise as an early intervention to support the mental health of dementia family caregivers
- Grief support before a death may address psychological distress during caregiving
- Future research should evaluate strategies to sustain treatment effects and test the intervention in larger controlled studies



Interested in being
trained in PLGS?

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