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Using "Kei chou" training for aged rehabilitation education

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Introduction:

We have a large number of elderly people in Japan. Occupational Therapists are required to attain advanced skills of communication and to enhance their understanding of elderly people. However, Students have difficulty to make contact and create relationships with the elderly.

Objectives:

We will introduce a plan to promote communication skills and training for OT students involved in elderly rehabilitation.

Report:

163 OT students participated 3 step training:

- 1) To help students understand the daily challenges the elderly face; which is done by using a program called "Instant Senior"
- 2) Students need to interact with the elderly (chatting, games, and sharing time). We recommend being involved as a volunteer in the community and spending time in the facilities for elderly.
- 3) To understand and appreciate the experiences and knowledge of elderly people around them. "Kei-chou" interview was held, with their relatives or acquaintances. "Kei-chou" means to "Listen intently to someone", following the story, nodding and acknowledging the persons conversation points. The listener needs to let the speaker control direction of the conversation and only interact to ask a few questions or to clarify something. Initially continuing to pay attention and focus on what elderly people are talking about is not easy, so students use simulation exercises to practice this skill.

After the training, students had group discussions using the nominal group process or the KJ technique. Through this training, the student's perception of elderly people changed. Ageism, a negative image of elderly people decreased. Kindness and consideration levels increased after the training and students felt more comfortable being around elderly people. After the "Kei-chou", they realized how little they know about aged people, and had gained respect and an interest with regards to aged people.

Conclusion:

80% of elderly people think they are healthy. How we can support their healthy lifestyle longer is important. For OT students', acquiring these skills was not easy, but through this training, students had the chance to better relate to the elderly population. This experience will hopefully help the students to become more professional in their future work with the elderly.