

0931

Strategies for coping with loneliness and depression among older people in Thailand

Jiranan Griffiths, Supawadee Putthinoi
Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Abstract

Strategies for coping with loneliness and depression among older people in Thailand

Jiranan Griffiths*, Supawadee Putthinoi*

*Department of Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences,

Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand.

Reduction in physical capacity as people age and the loss of social status on retirement may have an impact on psychological well being and may cause depression, anxiety and disease.

This study was a qualitative research project which had the purpose to investigate strategies for coping with loneliness and depression among older people who are members of senior clubs in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Subjects for this study were selected by the purposive sampling method; 30 older people were interviewed by using focus group discussion. The data were analyzed by content analysis method.

The results found that older people used many ways to cope with loneliness and depression. They would, for example, exercise, take up Gee Kong or stick dance, engage in religious activities, meditation and many other activities such as looking after pets, being with the family, gardening, crafts, joining activities in senior clubs or being volunteers or traveling. They also said that if loneliness and depression occurred in the future, the favorite coping strategies would be craft activities, gardening, exercising and reading. Other suggestions included meeting friends, shopping, improving their self esteem, being a volunteer and being prepared for any situation by using religion to help.

This information can be important evidence for health staff, especially occupational therapists, to use encourage people in local community to participate in planning activities to prevent loneliness and depression.

Key words: loneliness, depression, older people

Funding: Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand.