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Retirement from supported employment

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Ongoing Collaboration between Researchers and Service Providers

Research

• *Transition to Retirement (TTR)* Linkage Research Project 2009-2012

Practice

• AFFORD appoints TTR Coordinator 2010

Research to Practice

• AFFORD makes *Transition to Retirement* DVD 2011
• TTR manual + TTR DVD published by Sydney University Press 2013
The Research Project

 › **Title:** Transition to Retirement for Older Adults with a Chronic Disability: Increasing Community Capacity

 › **Project:** part-funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC)

 › **Industry partners:** part-funded by the Australian Foundation For Disability (Sydney), St. John of God, Accord (Melbourne)
Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) have an ageing workforce.

In 2007 there were 4,510 adults with a disability aged 50 years working in ADEs.

Projections suggest that by 2025 half of this workforce will consist of people over the age of 50 (McDermott et al., 2009).

Currently few clear pathways from ADEs to retirement, but increasing attention being given to this issue:


PART 1 FOCUS GROUPS (Bigby et al., 2011)

- Part 1 of our study involved focus groups of service users, disability service staff, and family members.
- These groups approach retirement for people with a disability with anxiety and perceive retirement as a risk to future well-being and participation.
- Supported employees commented about retirement:
  - ...you sit at home and you don’t do anything
  - ...you’re sitting at home and you’ve nothing to do
  - ...you go downhill quickly
  - I’ve got my friends here (at work) you know I go home and I go to work that’s enough for me ...no-one thinks of retiring...
Active Mentoring (Natural support)

- One day per week, instead of working, the person attends a **mainstream community group** of their choice and receives support from group members who volunteer to be **mentors**.
- Mentors trained to provide effective support and ensure activities are available.
Key Features of Active Mentoring to Promote Inclusion

SUPPORT FROM MENTORS

- **Social support** – greetings, conversation, introductions
- **Support for participation** in activities
  - Prompts for *when* to do an activity
  - Support for *how* to do an activity
  - Support for fitting in with group norms (unwritten rules)
  - Feedback and praise

CONSISTENT ACTIVITIES

- Group meets **weekly** at the same time and place.
- Identifying a **specific activity/role** that the person can learn to take responsibility for (with support from mentors).

PERSON-CENTREDNESS

- **One** person with disability per group.
- Group that fits with the person’s interests (so the activity is enjoyable).
Mentor Support

› Graeme is greeted by his mentors Martin and Olympia and supported to sign in (DVD clip Graeme 1).

› Mentor Olympia teaches Graeme how to pot seedlings (DVD clip Graeme 4).
INTERVENTION GROUP

- **29** individuals volunteered to drop one day at disability-specific employment/day program and join a mainstream community or volunteer group.
  - **Gender**: 18 (62%) men, 11 (38%) women
  - **Age**: 46 – 72 years, Mean = 57.4
  - **Primary Diagnosis**: 20 (69%) intellectual disability, 1 (3%) mental health, 4 (14%) physical disability, 1 (3%) vision, 1 (3%) hearing, 2 (7%) acquired brain injury
  - **Employment**: 26 (90%) supported employment (9 F/T, 17 P/T), 2 (10%) day program
  - **Living arrangements**: 4 (14%) independent, 12 (41%) group home, 9 (31%) hostel, 4 (14%) family.
Participants

COMPARISON GROUP

- People who were individually matched to an intervention participant (matched a closely as possible based on work/day program placement, living arrangements, age group, disability type) but continued to attend work/day program as usual.

- No significant difference between intervention and comparison groups in:
  - Primary disability diagnosis (intellectual disability 70%)
  - F/T (27%) or P/T (58%) employment status or day program attendance (15%)
  - Living arrangements (group home 47%)
  - Gender (male 73%)

- Comparison group (mean = 53.8 years) significantly ($p = .028$) younger than intervention group (mean = 57.4 years).
Intervention and Data Collection Timeline

**Intervention participant:**
Pre-test & interview

**Matched comparison participant:**
Pre-test

**6 months at community group, 1 day/week**

**Post-test & interview**

**Continued working as usual during 6-month period**

**Post-test**
Outcomes Assessed

INTERVENTION GROUP ONLY

- Number of people who joined and attended a mainstream community group or volunteering opportunity.

- Nature of the community group/volunteering.

- Change in work days/hours.

- Views about participating after 6 months attending a group (not all participants were able to be interviewed because of communication difficulties).
25 people (86% of intervention participants) successfully joined a mainstream community or volunteer group.

People with a lifelong disability 45 years or older commencing research intervention, \( N = 29 \)

- Attend community or volunteer group during 6-month intervention, \( n = 25 \)
  - Continues to attend community or volunteer group, \( n = 21 \)
  - Returned to full-time work, \( n = 1 \)
  - No longer going to intervention group, \( n = 4 \)
  - Acute mental illness; hospitalised, \( n = 1 \)
  - Day program staff unable to continue 1:1 support + safety concerns at Men's Shed, \( n = 1 \)
  - Participant died, \( n = 1 \)

- Did not finish 6-month intervention, \( n = 4 \)
  - Trial at 3 groups; withdrew, \( n = 1 \)
  - Attended a community group for between 3 and 5 months, \( n = 2 \)
  - Acute physical illness; withdrew, \( n = 1 \)
Type of Volunteering Opportunity or Community Group

MEN \((n = 17)\)

VOLUNTEERING
- Community (soup) kitchen \((n = 1)\)
- Community nursery \((n = 1)\)
- Aviation museum* \((n = 1)\)
- Lifeline charity shop* \((n = 1)\)

COMMUNITY GROUP
- Men’s shed* \((n = 8)\)
- Seniors group \((n = 1)\)
- Seniors choir \((n = 1)\)
- Bowls club \((n = 1)\)
- Seniors 10-pin bowling league \((n = 1)\)
- Community garden \((n = 1)\)

* Single sex group

WOMEN \((n = 10)\)

VOLUNTEERING
- Cat protection society* \((n = 1)\)
- Community nursery \((n = 1)\)
- Frail-aged social group \((n = 1)\)

COMMUNITY GROUP
- Exercise* and social group \((n = 1)\)
- Community (teaching) kitchen \((n = 1)\)
- Seniors group \((n = 4)\)
- Walking and knitting group \((n = 1)\)

Volunteering **8 hours** per week or more allows you to retain the **mobility allowance**
INTERVENTION GROUP: Change from pre-test to post-test (6 months later)

- Ongoing social contact with an average of 4 new people (friends and acquaintances)
- Time spent with new social contacts (all new contacts not just community group members) increased from 0.03 hours/week at pre-test to 3.30 at post-test, $p < .001$
- Weekly work hours reduced from an average of 26.64 hours per week to 22.54 hours ($p < .001$)
- 3 participants retired fully during the project.
Participants’ Views About the Group They Joined

Findings from participant interviews after 6 months attending the group

POSITIVE

- All participants stated that they enjoyed going to their group.

  I’ll keep on doing it for the rest of my life, bowling (lawn bowls).

  I find it really good going there (community garden).

  People are so nice .. We talk about all sorts of things (seniors social group).

  They’re my mates...they look after me, they talk to me…and sometimes I help them (men’s shed).

NEGATIVE

- No participants reported any negative views about their group.
Worker Loneliness Questionnaire: Factors and Items

**FACTORS**

**Aloneness**
(6 items)
\( \alpha = .75 \)

- Is it easy for you to make friends?
- Is it hard for you to make friends?
- Do you feel alone?
- Is it hard to get people to like you?
- Do you feel left out of things?
- Are you lonely?

**Social Satisfaction**
(6 items)
\( \alpha = .63 \)

- Do you have people to talk to?
- Do you have lots of friends?
- Can you find a friend when you need one?
- Are there people you can go to when you need help?
- Do people like you?
- Do you have friends?
Corrected Means (covariate pre-test social satisfaction)

Corrected Social Satisfaction by Group

$$F (1, 43) = 10.61, \ p = .002$$
$$\eta_p^2 = .20 \text{ (large effect size)}$$

Intervention vs. Comparison Group
Post-Test Social Satisfaction
At post-test after intervention group participants had experienced 6 months of weekly attendance at a mainstream volunteering opportunity or community group:

- Intervention group participants social satisfaction increased from pre-test post-test ($p < .05$).
- They reported feeling significantly more socially satisfied than comparison group members at post-test.

Social satisfaction involved having friends and social support (from friends).
 › Graeme describes what he enjoys about volunteering at the community nursery: activity, social contact, community participation (travel) (DVD clip Graeme 6).

 › Laurie describes having a chat and making new friends at the community choir (DVD clip Laurie 3).
Conclusions: Effectiveness and Generalisability

EFFECTIVENESS

- **86%** of intervention group participants participated in a mainstream community or volunteer group
  - The model was *largely very successful* in bringing about sustained membership of these groups.

GENERALISABILITY

- Most participants were supported employees with mild/moderate disability and little or no evident challenging behaviour (not formally assessed) and capable of routine self-care
  - It remains to be seen whether this approach could be generalised successfully to individuals with more severe disability, challenging behaviour, or in need of personal care (e.g., toileting).
Conclusions: Outcomes

NO DIFFERENCE

- Concerns about retirement resulting in lack of participation, social isolation, loneliness and depression were not supported by our data.

- For most outcomes (depression, life events, loneliness, quality of life) there were no significant differences between intervention group and comparison group participants.

- Baseline scores on depression, loneliness were low leaving little room for improvement (but considerable room to detect deterioration).

- Note that most intervention group participants did not retire fully, just reduced work by 1 day, so this study is not a direct test of total retirement.

BENEFITS

- At post-test, intervention group participants reported feeling significantly more socially satisfied than comparison group members.

- This finding suggests that intervention group participants felt that they have friends and social support (from friends) at least in part as a result of their experiences at a mainstream community or volunteer group.

- High levels of social interaction while attending the group, but almost no examples of contact with other group members outside the group.
AFFORD appointed a *Transition to Retirement* Coordinator in 2010

This 3 year pilot research project saw 26 AFFORD employees transitioning to retirement by joining mainstream community groups and volunteer organisations. AFFORD continues to support these individuals.

AFFORD continues to run the TTR program which now supports 44 employees in their transition to retirement.
Manuel + DVD to be published by Sydney University Press, November 2013

Transition to Retirement DVD (AFFORD, 2011)
Transition to Retirement DVD

- Six stories following people participating in the *Transition To Retirement* Program.
- Each story details the experiences of the participant, their families, carers and members of the community or volunteer organizations involved.
Foreword by Ken Baker, Chief Executive NDS

9 chapters designed for practitioners with practical guidance for implementation:
- Links to DVD clips
- Vignettes
- Tips

2 Appendices
- Travel training
- Forms
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