SESSION 1460 (SYMPOSIUM)

INTEREST GROUP SESSION—GRANDPARENTS AS CAREGIVERS: GERONTOLOGICAL INTERVENTION SCIENCE: FOUR DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO GRANDFAMILY RESEARCH

Chair: Christine Fruhauf, *Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, United States*
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Discussant: Bert Hayslip, *University of North Texas, Denton, Texas, United States*

For nearly three decades, the interest in custodial grandparents and their grandchildren has resulted in empirical studies from scholars addressing both the challenges and strengths often experienced by grandfamilies (i.e., grandparents and the grandchildren in their home). As the scholarship of intervention science increases in interest and as scholars continue to advance the field of knowledge with grandfamilies, it is important to share best-practices as we plan the future of gerontological intervention science. In this symposium, investigators with extensive experience researching custodial grandparents and in creating, testing, and refining interventions with grandfamilies will present theoretical, methodological, and practical lessons learned and empirical findings from their interventions. The first paper, by Musil and colleagues, will address a current online training program addressing resourcefulness with grandmothers. Second, Montoro-Rodriguez and Hayslip will discuss the use of the selective optimization with compensation model as applied to a goal-setting intervention with grandparents. The third paper by Fruhauf, Yancura and colleagues will address the progress and impact from the first two years of their intervention with grandparents, grandchildren, and service providers. The final paper, presented by Webster, Smith, and Infurna will focus on a dyadic intervention with grandparents and adolescent grandchildren as they seek to build social intelligence. Hayslip, the discussant, will integrate key points from these interventions while addressing considerations for future research as scholars embark on refining and testing their interventions related to grandparents raising grandchildren.

IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN: A STRENGTHS-BASED INTERVENTION

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Many grandparents raising grandchildren experience depression. Few interventions take a strengths-based approach to improve their mental health. To address this gap, this study utilized an adapted version of Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PTC) for grandparents (PTC-G) to improve their self-care, communication, and self-efficacy. Grandparents completed self-assessments including the CES-D short form prior to the intervention, immediately after the 6-week program, and at 6-months. Focus groups were also conducted during the 6-month follow-up to further explore positive behavior change. Data from all sources were analyzed to show that the PTC-G program significantly lowered depressive symptoms of grandparents raising grandchildren. Qualitative data shows that grandparents report increased awareness and use of self-care practices and community services. By improving the health and well-being of grandparents raising grandchildren, the PTC-G intervention shows promise in reducing depression and improving long-term mental health outcomes in vulnerable grandfamilies.

GIFT: GRANDMOTHER INITIATIVES IN FAMILY TRANSFORMATION

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Little research has been conducted on the development and testing of interventions to support grandmothers during their caregiving experience. Our descriptive and pilot intervention studies provide the foundation for converting a face-to-face resourcefulness intervention into an NIH-funded self-administered, online intervention for grandmother caregivers, to determine its impact on individual health and family well-being. The online intervention provides personal and social resourcefulness training using online video content and structured reflective journaling to reinforce resourcefulness skills compared to reflective journaling. We are testing the resourcefulness intervention in a randomized clinical trial (RCT) with a national sample of 334 grandmothers living with/raising grandchildren, comparing the resourcefulness training protocol vs. unstructured journaling alone. Given the limited interventions available to grandmother caregivers, an intervention that transcends time and place and is available 24 hours a day is expected to bolster the personal and social resourcefulness, which will in turn affect individual and family outcomes.

THE USE OF SOLUTION-ORIENTED STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

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There is consistent evidence that caregiving for grandchildren is psychologically, emotionally and physically challenging for grandparents. However, many of them may not be able to receive the support they need from their own families or public services. Using the Selective Optimization with Compensation framework and principles of solution-oriented cognitive models, we implemented a six-week session pilot program to increase grandparents' effective coping strategies, reduce stress, and improve parenting and communication with grandchildren. Preliminary data from 22