Green Care Farms: Connecting Elders with Community

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Green care farming is a combination of agricultural production with health and aging services. They connect clients with community, nature and a sense of purpose and meaning. They also provide much needed respite for caregivers. Historically, green care farms (GCFs) connected marginalized groups with the broader community. GCFs are being revitalized in several countries throughout Europe and in Montana in the USA.

Introduction

Strengths-Based
GCFs focus on what participants can contribute to the farm. It empowers them to see what they are able to do and gives them the opportunity to contribute in a personally meaningful way.

Meaning & Purpose
Often relegated to passively receiving care in more traditional settings, GCF clients enjoy engaging in personally meaningful activities and contributing to the farm through a broad array of available activities.

Green Environment
Studies have shown being in nature can promote health and well-being. Clients report connecting with nature and animals to be a strong benefit of GCFs.

Summary

- GCFs are an innovative, often intergenerational, model of LTSS.
- GCFs are integrated into health and aging services to allow for a broad spectrum of clients to participate, including those from a lower socioeconomic status.
- Benefits reported by clients include a strong sense of community, the ability to engage in meaningful work, well-being and connecting with nature.

Evidence Base

Community
Relationships are formed naturally through engaging in everyday activities and are not based on care provision. Clients form peer relationships and are integrated into the lives of farmers and their families.

Types:
- Day programs
- Rehabilitative programs
- Residential care

Populations Served:
- Elders
- Dementia
- Developmental/intellectual disabilities
- Juvenile courts
- Serious mental illness
- Veterans

Main References


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