



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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Therapeutic Horticultural Activities - Cardiac Rehabilitation New Milestone

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Introduction

The therapeutic benefits from horticultural activities have been documented since 19th century. According to American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA), horticultural therapy is defined by the engagement of clients or patients in gardening and plant-based activities, facilitated by a trained therapist. These activities are a source of relaxation, satisfaction, enjoyment, and accomplishment. Studies showed that horticultural therapy helps improving cognitive abilities, social skill, and lessens negative emotion. Nowadays, horticultural therapy is being used in hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and a range of community settings. In Hong Kong, it's a new concept of practicing horticultural therapy in recent years.

Cardiac rehabilitation (CR) program Phase I & Phase II has been conducting in the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) since 1993. To extend our rehabilitation service to cardiac disease patients, we co-jointed with Community Health Resource Centre of PMH; established "Therapeutic Horticultural Activities" in the rooftop of hospital building from 1 November 2016. Participants were required for self-planned planting activities.

Objectives

- 1) To provide physical and psychosocial support and strength to CR patients
- 2) To develop a leisure pursuit to CR patients so as to enhance the quality of life and facilitate the rehabilitation process
- 3) Enhance cohesiveness among CR patient groups
- 4) Foster partnership among nurses and patients

Methodology

Patients under CR program in PMH were invited to join this activity. A group of 10 volunteers from the CR patients was formed with a leader was voted. Selection of planting species was decided to include vegetables and herbs at this stage. A duty roster and assignment was set up to organize their planting activities including: sowing, watering, fertilization, insecticization and harvesting. A chatting platform through mobile phone was developed to facilitate the communication. A designated page in Facebook was set up for sharing their planting activities photos and feelings to their families or friends.

Result

From 1 November 2016 to end of January 2017, the total attendance was over 200 nos. Evaluation of this program was performed with encouraging result. Evaluation showed that all of them (100%) highly agreed the horticultural activities lessened their psychological stress, reinforced the communication and support. Relationship and trust among their peer group and nursing professionals was fostered. They showed more confidence on the "Road of Rehabilitation". They were happy and active to share their planting experience and rewards with their families and friends. All of them showed their interest in continuing this activity. They also expressed their wish to be the volunteers in PMH CR group. Horticultural therapy really makes the heart alive green !