

Planting Seeds of Inclusion & Sustainability: Findings from a Participatory Campus-Community Gardening Project



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Genevieve Currie, RN, MN; Elaine Schow, RN, MN;

Bev Mathison, PhD

Outcomes

- Partnering with inter-professional stakeholders within a community project
- Identifying benefits and barriers
- Incorporating students into a community development project
- Sharing benefits of horticulture therapy with community participants



Planting Seeds Project Development



- Existing community garden
- MRU student association
- Multidisciplinary faculty
- MRU nursing students
- University mandate to enhance community outreach partnerships



Health and Social Needs Winter 2015

- Literature review HT
- Data: locally, provincially, nationally and internationally HT
- Windshield survey
- Population profile: MRU and surrounding communities



Literature Review

- **Health belief model** (HBM, 2012)
- **Trans-theoretical model of change** (Kowalski, Jeznach & Tuokko, 2014)
- **Horticulture therapy** (Clatworthy, Hinds & Camic, 2013; McGuire, 1997; Owen, Thomas & Rudolfa, 2013; Qian, et al 2015; Stein, 1997; Ulfseth, Josephsson & Alsaker, 2015)



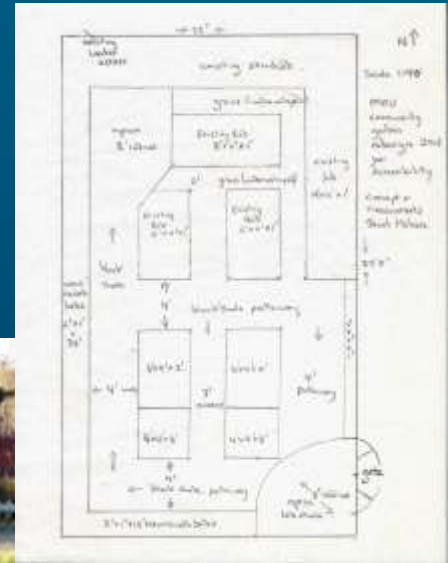
Spring 2015

- Research funding acquired for an interdisciplinary project (Planting seeds horticulture therapy pilot project)
- Second group of community health nursing students
- Stakeholder consultation and focus groups
- Horticulture therapy begins



Stakeholder Consultation

- Assessed **3 agencies** close to the campus using Community as Partner Model (Vollman, Anderson & McFarlane, 2012)
- **Focus group interviews** and common themes:
 - Group activities and socialization
 - Group formation
 - Garden knowledge
 - Accessibility issues



Partnerships



MRU

Student Association

CHN students

Seniors housing

Mental health rehab

**Isolated community
members**

Horticulture therapist



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Partnership Goals

- **Community outreach**
- **Increase physical access**
- **Increase social support**
- **Reduce psychosocial barriers**
- **Increase community participation**
- **Overall health and wellness**



Research Project

- Research question
- Methodology: PAR
- Using horticulture therapy: 12 sessions
- Nursing student involvement



Inclusive Community Gardening: Horticultural therapy group program

- Horticultural therapist-led
- 12 week program
- Garden program in community where people live – rather than clinical setting
- Goal directed “not busy work”
- Focused on cognitive, emotional, physical, social, spiritual domains of wellbeing



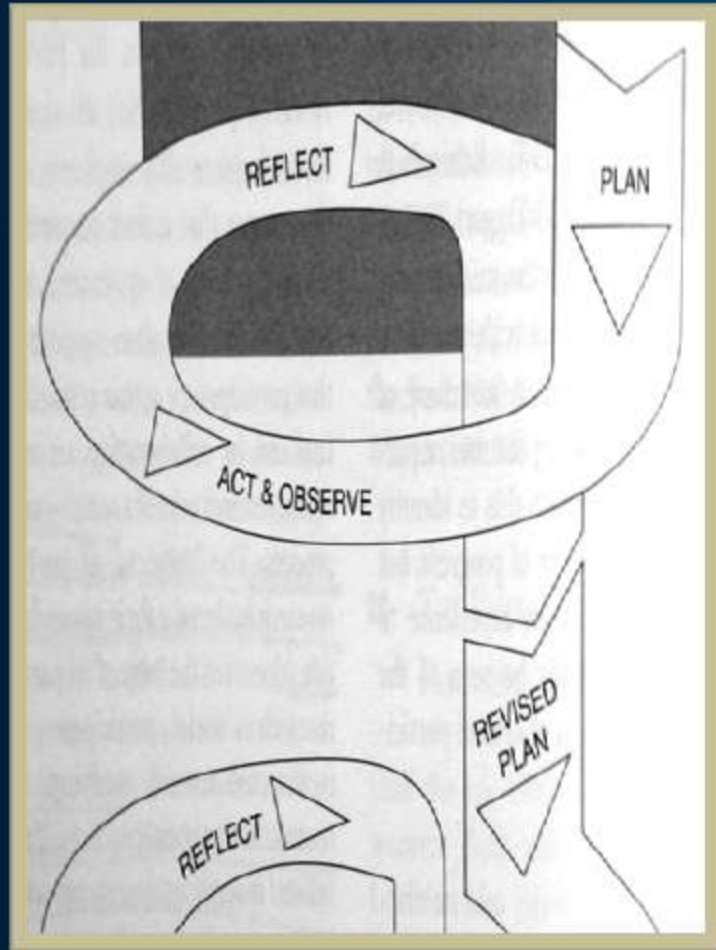
Research Questions

1. What is the *experience* of participating in a Campus Community Garden Horticulture Therapy Project?

2. What are the perceived *benefits and barriers* to participating in a Campus Community Garden Horticulture Therapy Project?



Methodology: PAR



Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005

Ongoing spiral process of reflection concerning:

- Experiences of inclusion (strengths-based)?
- Barriers & benefits?
- HT Therapy experience
- Influence and community health action



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Methods

- Participant observations of HT program
- Field notes
- Program process document analysis
- Post-program individual interviews



Participants/Recruitment

- 8 community health nursing students (+1 instructor)
- 7 researchers
- 5 research participants (from 3 seniors residential facilities)
- 5 community volunteers (2 professional care giver, 1 senior, 1 adolescent, 1 child)
- 4 mixed ability gardeners
- 2 research collaborators/facilitators
- 1 research assistant



Nursing Student Involvement

- **Not concrete:
overwhelmed at times**
- **Early stages of the
project**
- **“Is this all?”**
- **“Is this nursing?”**
- **Enjoyed actual
engagement with
community residents**
- **Mutual connection**
- **Saw possibilities not
barriers**



Benefits & Barriers

Participants:

- All domains of wellbeing
- Outlet for interest in gardening (activities, food and to-go items)
- Place to be visible, recognized and useful
- Expectations of participating in social activities

Organizational:

- Shifting values/ approaches
 - Creating accessible spaces
 - Reorienting from individual to community
 - *Strengthening partnerships*



Seeds Planted

- **Inter-sectoral and inter-professional partnerships**
- **Re-imagined personal and institutional possibilities**
- **Community engagements and citizenship**



Preliminary Findings

Experiences ...in all aspects of the project:

- In the flow
- Hopefulness through connection
- Transformative place
- Social harvest





“ It was like coming home...I have been detached from this type of life for a long time. And it was like coming home....”

“It meant a great deal to me to be able to go to a place like that and to share stories and friendship. When we parted, I hugged and kissed everyone that was there...”



Future Growth

- Intergenerational project
- Mixed abilities project



Discussion & Questions

