

Gratitude Interventions with Direct Care Workers in a Dementia-Specific Assisted Living: A Pilot Study

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Background

- Reports on high degree of caregiver burnout, toxic work environments, and a chronically disengaged workforce create significant problems for dementia-specific healthcare organizations.
- Previous research indicates that gratitude interventions can result in greater employee engagement and decrease the rate of burnout.
- Limited studies have focused on direct care workers in dementia healthcare organizations.
- No validated tools have been used to measure direct care workers brain health in healthcare organizations.

Study Goal and Aims

Overall Goal:

To test the approach of implementing an organizationally-based gratitude program, focused on measuring the impact on the work environment and relative health and wellbeing benefits identified by colleagues.

Aims:

1. To test the feasibility of a gratitude intervention with dementia healthcare direct care workers.
2. To measure impact on engagement, brain health, and wellbeing.

Methodological Approach

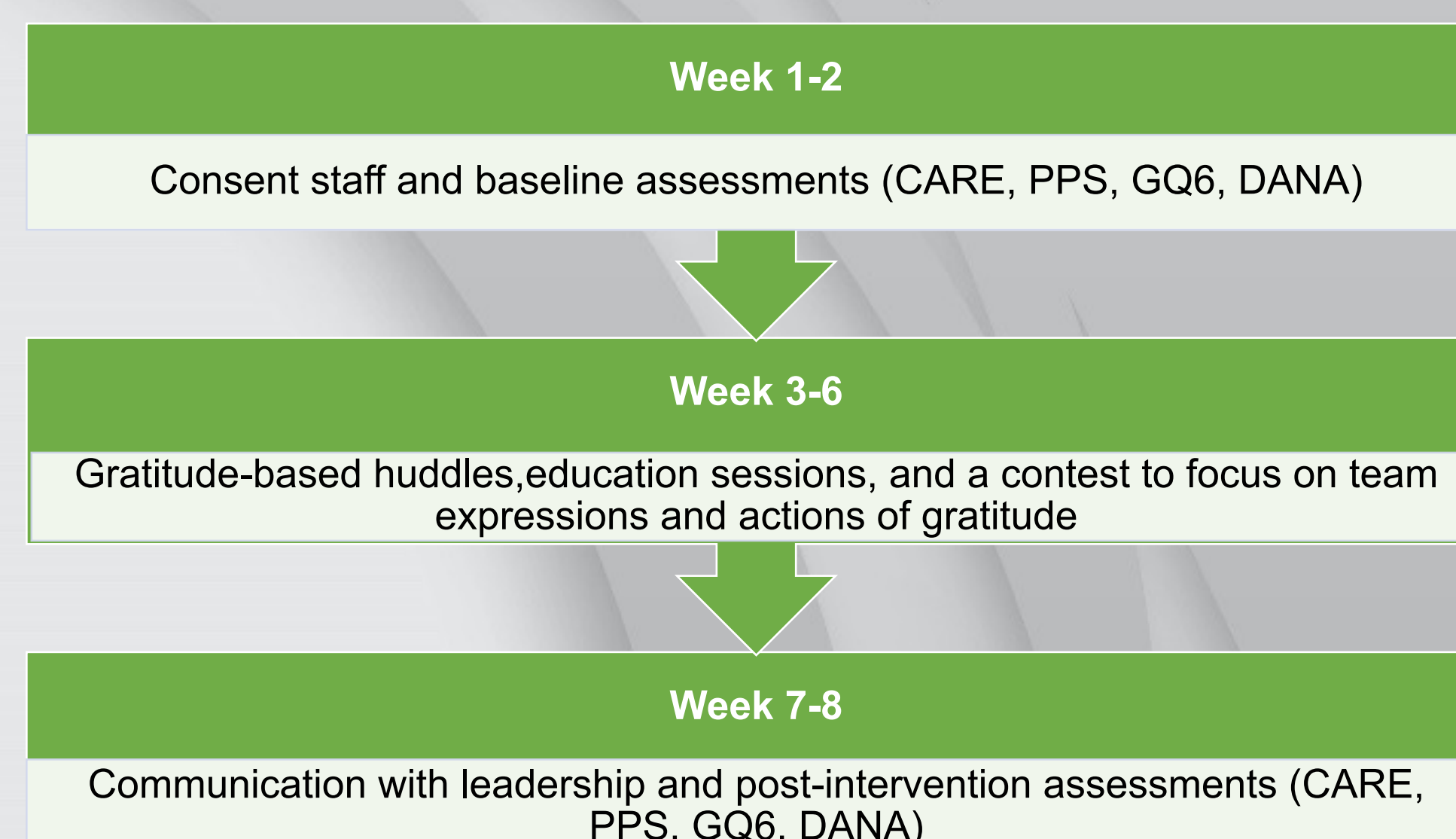
Methods:

- Baseline and post-assessment surveys on engagement, workplace meaningfulness and gratitude were conducted with direct care workers (n=17).
- In addition to the surveys, a novel neurocognitive assessment tool was administered at baseline, midpoint, and post-intervention with staff.
- This tool (DANA) consisted of reaction time-based cognitive efficiency measures.
- Statistical analysis included a paired t-test to test significant difference between scores.

Sample:

- Participants were recruited from a dementia-care focused assisted living in Maryland.

Study Design:



Baseline and Post-Assessment Surveys

Positive Practice Scales (PPS)

- To measure respect, integrity, and meaning
- Survey items were scored on a 7-point scale

The Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6)

- To measure gratitude
- Survey items were scored on a 7-point scale with two reversed scores

Consultation and Relational Empathy (CARE) Measure

- To measure trauma-informed care engagement
- 10 item questionnaire on a 6-point scale with space for additional comments

Table 1: The scales used to measure gratitude at baseline and post-intervention.

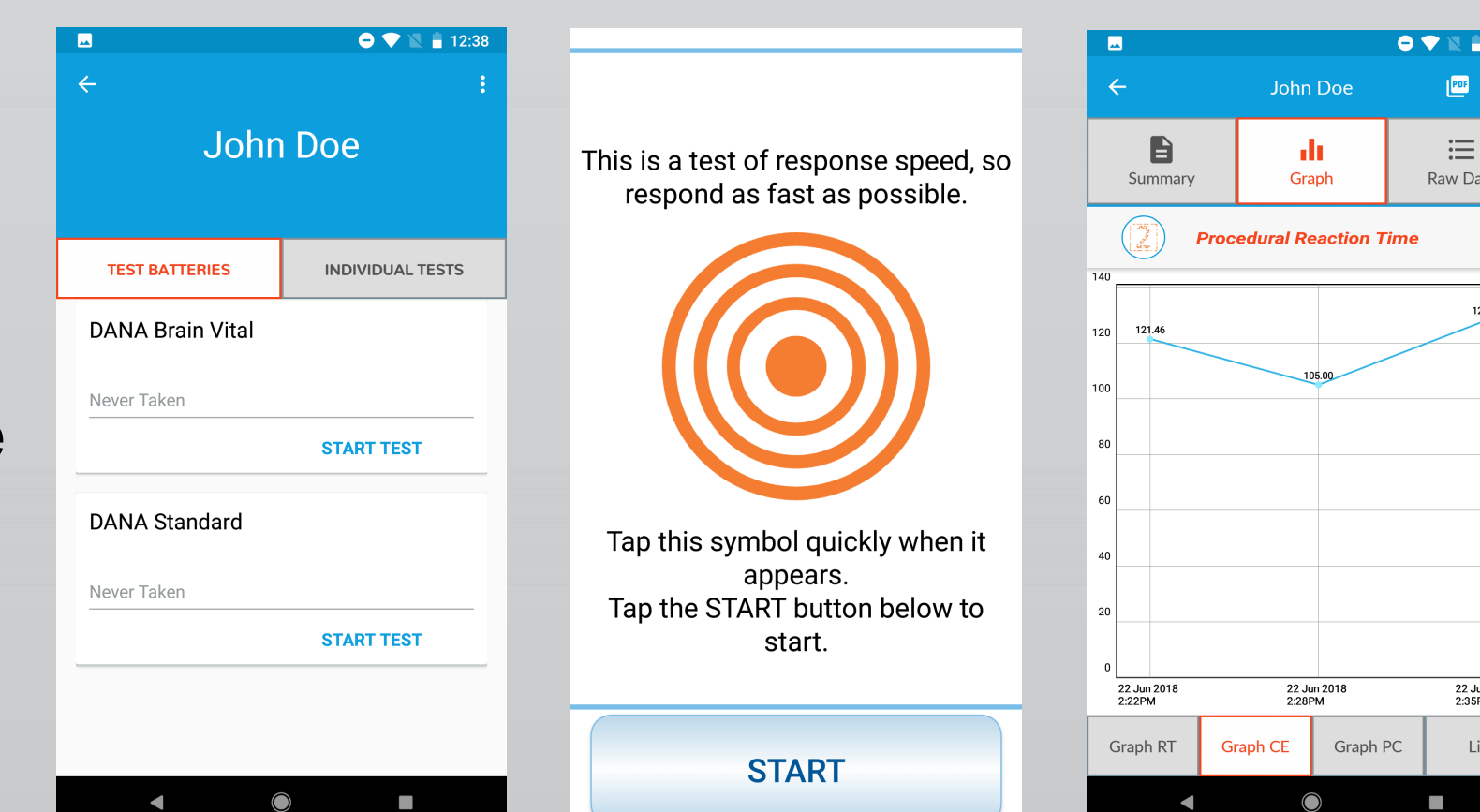
DANA

Features:

- An FDA cleared Neurocognitive Assessment Tool (NCAT) running as a mobile application on Android and iOS devices.
- Includes both cognitive and psychological test batteries.
- More robust than just cognitive testing.
- Uses evidence-based tests.

Benefits:

- Fast screening for changes in neurobehavioral and cognitive function.
- Very sensitive to changes in cognitive efficiency due to any cause.
- Easy-to-use tool for a variety of settings.
- Tracks changes in cognitive processing over time.
- Monitors responsiveness to treatment.

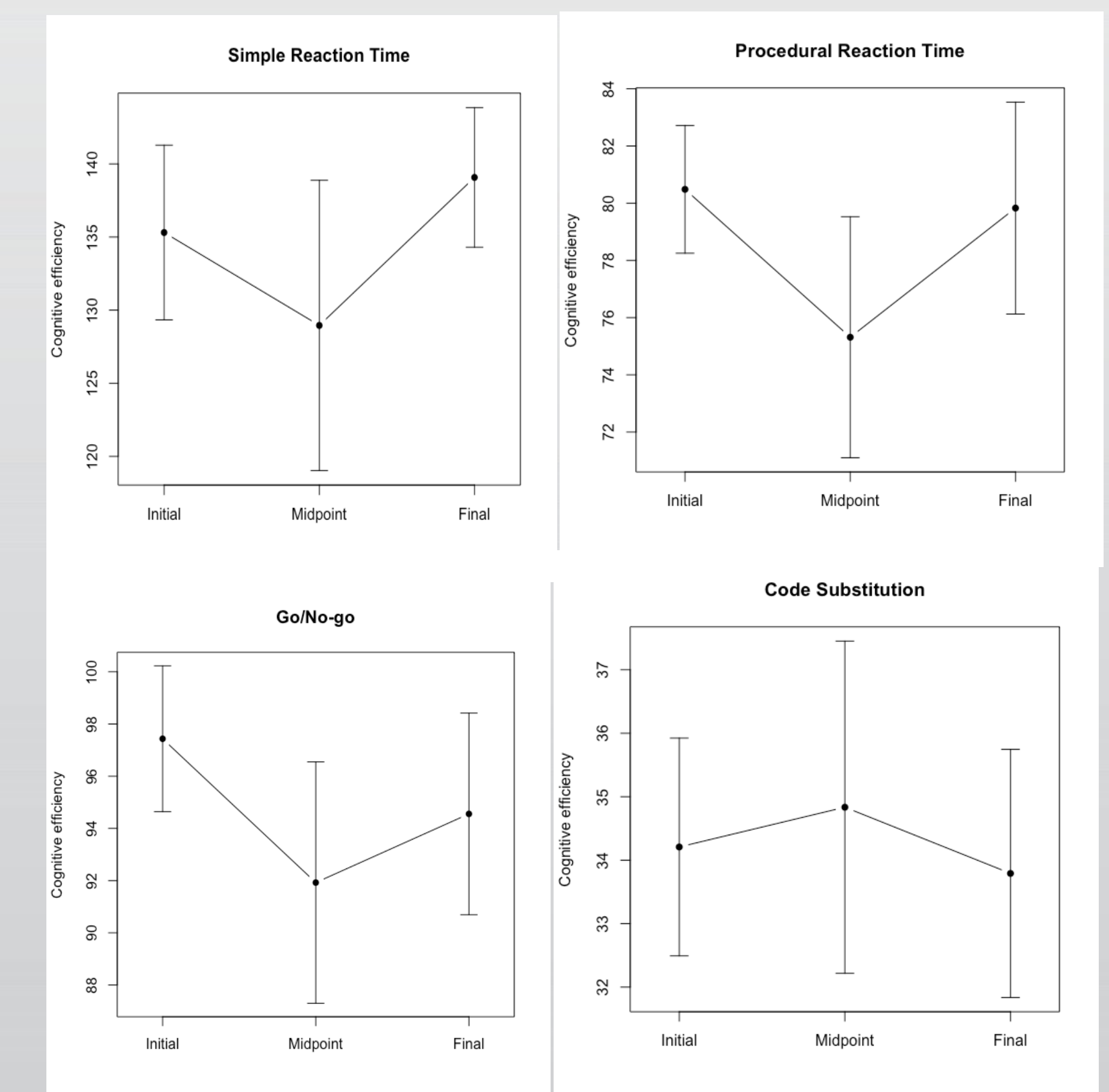
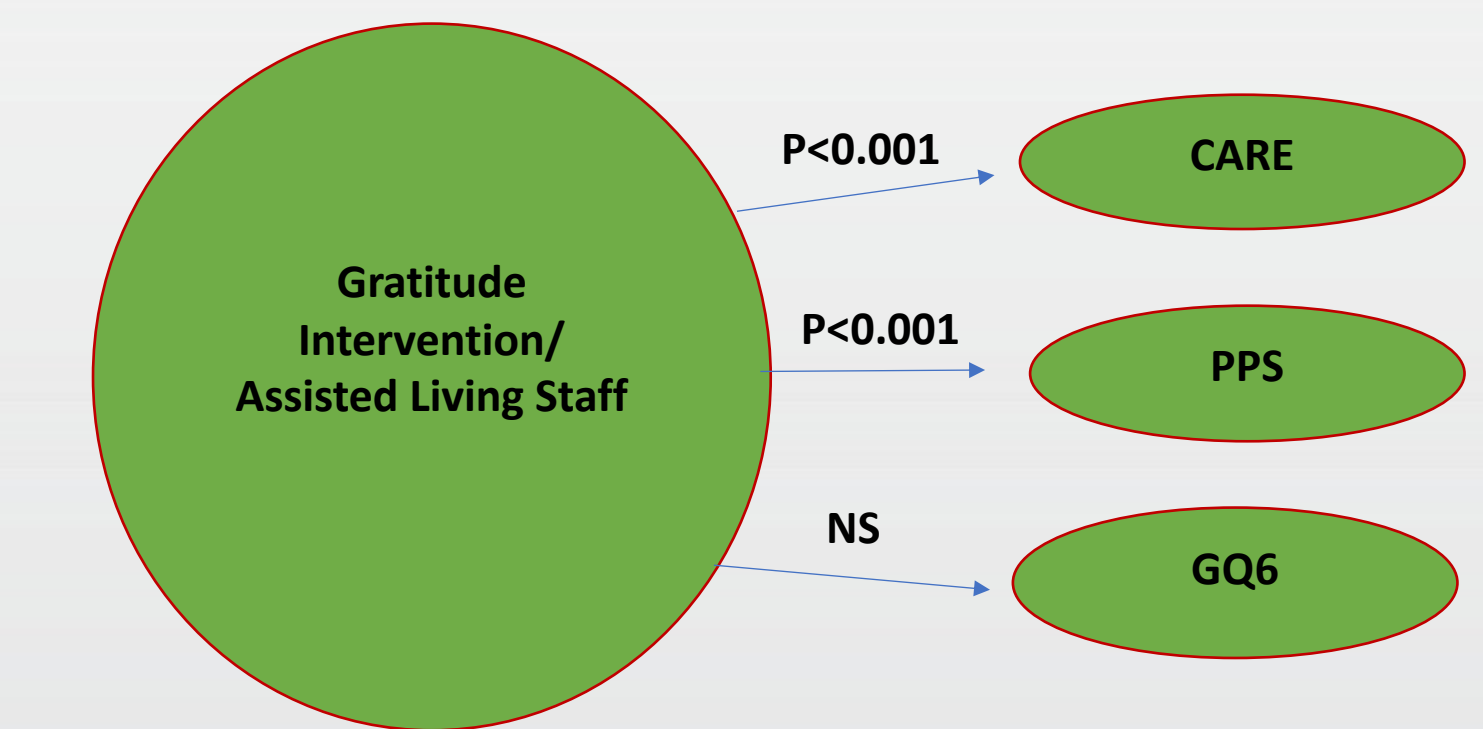


The Neuroscience of Gratitude

Gratitude's Impact:

- Leaders' positive impact on employee experience activates high levels of reward and self-regulation circuitry in the brain.
- Employees can:
 - Have increased activation of cognitive resources.
 - Become more creative and innovative.
 - Solve complex problems with fewer mistakes.
 - Be more collaborative in group environments.
- Have more willingness to support others around them.

Gratitude Intervention Outcomes



Conclusions

- This pilot study indicated that dementia healthcare direct care workers can be engaged with novel technology measures of brain health and wellbeing.
- In addition, adaptive gratitude intervention may have an impact on workplace engagement.
- Further research needs to replicate and expand gratitude-based interventions to determine long-term impact, behavioral, and biological mechanism of action for both staff and dementia residents.

Acknowledgements

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