

Village Improv for Alzheimers

Midterm Update



Village Improv for Alzheimers (VIA) is an innovative approach to person-centered dementia care that utilizes weekly improvised theatre and storytelling sessions to create meaningful activity specifically developed for people living with dementia. The core goals are to foster self-expression, agency, recreation and social engagement, as well as emphasize participants' in-the-moment strengths and personality rather than memory. The core principle of the VIA program is there are no wrong answers – say yes, and then all ideas can be celebrated and built upon. This CIDC initiative has the specific intent of expanding the reach and benefit of the VIA program, providing it throughout Alberta and increasing the availability of creative and evidenced-based services in our province. This is done through the unique concept of training healthcare professionals working in facilities with people living with dementia, so they have the knowledge and skills to run VIA programs independently. Alterations to the approach were required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions; however, this did not hinder progress.

Midterm Milestones:

- Completion of the VIA training handbook with setup, activities, and sample sessions.
- Completion of training videos featuring facilitators demonstrating the activities.
- Completion and launch of an online resource group for trainees of the VIA.
- Created a 2-day training workshop - in February 2020, the first training workshop was held for health care professionals, primarily attended by recreation therapists and program coordinators from throughout Alberta.
- Supplemental training was offered over Zoom to address the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and online program delivery.
- Keeping in touch with participants from the initial workshop and receiving updates on the status at their facilities.
- Looking at ways to adapt and offer program training virtually if COVID-19 restrictions remain in place. This has included connecting with family caregivers virtually to support them to use the VIA program within their homes.

May 3, 2021

