



CASE: GROUP REHABILITATION

Friendships, well-being, and savings from rehabilitation

The Circle of Friends group activities are coordinated by the Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People with the objective of alleviating and preventing loneliness among older people. So far, 7,000 older people from across Finland have participated in the activities of the Circle of Friends. The circle receives funding from RAY.

The Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People has studied the effectiveness of psychosocial group rehabilitation on older people. 235 persons who had reached the age of 75 and suffered from loneliness participated in the study. Half of them participated in group rehabilitation, while the other half formed the control group.

The rehabilitation was organised for groups of eight people. The meetings took from two to six hours and continued for three months.

The groups were divided into the following three categories according to content: art and activity groups; group exercise and discussion groups; and group therapy and therapeutic writing groups.

The rehabilitation group's emotional well-being and memory improved more in comparison with the control group. Many of the participants were also able find new friends in the groups. They also reported that they were in good health remarkably more often than the control group, meaning that they needed less health care services.



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The One Life health project strives towards a healthier Finland. The Finnish Brain Association, the Finnish Diabetes Association, the Finnish Lung Health Association, the Organisation for Respiratory Health, the Finnish Association for Mental Health, the Finnish Heart Association, and the Cancer Society of Finland have teamed up to promote people's health and welfare throughout their lives. Duodecim participates in the project as an expert organisation.

Costs

In the study, the rehabilitation cost 881 euros per person. This sum included the group activities and other organised activities, training costs, accessible taxi services as well as meals and trips during the rehabilitation.

Savings

In one year, the intervention group used social and health care services worth over 3,122 euros, with 1,522 euros in health care costs. The control group's total costs were 4,752 euros, with 2,465 euros in health care service costs. When the expenses of group rehabilitation are taken into account, the intervention saved around 750 euros per person in social and health care costs.

Sources

- Ikääntyneiden yksinäisyys. Psykososiaalisen ryhmäkuntoutuksen vaikuttavuus. Report on loneliness among the elderly, Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older People, 2005.
- http://www.vtkl.fi/fin/toimimme/ystavapiiri_toiminta/



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