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1. BACKGROUND

At Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center (DC VAMC)’s 120-bed Community Living Center (CLC), dedicated and caring staff provide patient-centered rehabilitation and restorative services, as well as inpatient long-term care, palliative and hospice services. Along with traditional methods of care, the DC VAMC offers Veterans the opportunity to heal the mind, body, and spirit through its CLC Healing Arts Program. At the heart of this program lies an understanding of the aging process: moving beyond the “deficit” approach that stresses losses and decline to embrace an “asset” approach that rejoices in the strengths, achievements, and potential of later life—not in spite of aging, but because of aging.

Since 2013, Atlas Research (Atlas) and National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) has been working as partners to formally stand up and operationalize this Healing Arts Program. While Atlas provides general program oversight, communications and metrics support, NCCA leads the daily project management activities at DV VAMC and implementation and operationalization of the Healing Arts program in the CLC.

Weekly healing arts activities are listed on the CLC activities calendar and are open to Veterans, staff, and family members or visitors. Current activities include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healing Arts Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Movement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shibashi</strong> is a movement and breathing exercise that incorporates mind, body and spirit principles. Participation in this seated series of 18 gentle movements and breathing helps residents improve circulation, breathing, and range of motion while it engages their imaginations through the use of healing imagery.</td>
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<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Morning Jazz</strong> is an atmospheric jazz performance by a musician each Monday morning in the CLC atrium. It is intended to “welcome the day” for everyone, residents and staff alike, with a song. It sets the stage to change the Monday blues to mellow grooves.</td>
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<td><strong>Shift Change</strong> is a music performance by a musician near the nurses’ stations during afternoon shift change. It rotates between the two wings of the CLC from week to week, sending out the outgoing shift and welcoming the incoming nurses on an uplifting note.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Arts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Open Studio</strong> is a free-flow open art-making time, allows resident to express their artistic ideas through painting, drawing, or other media. The finished artwork can then be submitted for display in the Resident exhibit in the Capitol View Gallery.</td>
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<td><strong>Phillips Collection Partnership:</strong> In a partnership with America’s First Museum of Modern Art, Veterans will be given a personalized, docent-led tour. When they return, they will work with a professional visual artist to create a piece of visual work based on their experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Art Cart</strong> is a portable art-making experience that brings materials to veterans at their bedside to encourage creative self-expression.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Capital View Gallery:</strong> Exhibitions are curated three times per year to grace the corridors of the CLC with engaging, educational and beautiful images. All of the exhibited artwork is created by either Veterans or Military family members from the Metro area. A talk and tour, biographical information and artwork labels support the paintings, textiles, prints and photographs on view, and serves as yet another way to highlight the healing of the creative arts.</td>
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The team is working towards capturing residents’ preferences and incorporating them into daily care plans to ensure Veterans are able to participate in any and all activities they are interested in.
A common phrase we often hear is “quality over quantity.” But in 2014-2015, the Healing Arts team made equally important strides in both. With the addition of an on-site Project Manager and several new team members, classes were provided more consistently and more often. The Healing Arts program operationalized into a more seamless and predictable program. With those improvements, over time, more residents and staff attended — leading to even more meaningful experiences.

QUALITY: STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIPS, POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Healing Arts Team members continued to embed themselves within the CLC community as team members and colleagues who support the important mission of delivering person-centered care. They worked with staff to add activities to the master Activity calendar, participated in Integrated Disciplinary Team meetings when appropriate, and worked with Recreational Therapy professionals to help capture residents’ activities and capture those activities into Individual Care Plans. The team knows there is more work to be done to solidify this process — but in 2015 the team made great headway.

Through the regular presence of Healing Arts team members at the CLC, staff and residents began to look to the team as trusted peers — and many times, residents and staff expressed how much the activities mean to them. Because of these trusting relationships, residents began opening up in surprising ways — revealing hidden talents, offering up ideas, and sharing their gratitude.

Shibashi – Altering the Soundscape
When Mr. J joined Tai Chi, the class was using all Japanese-inspired music. He asked for some classical and jazz music instead. The Healing Arts leader found them online and bought a few through iTunes -- then wove in some of each into the sessions. Then, based on another suggestion, she added in the Gospel song, “This little light of mine.” Class participants felt comfortable making suggestions, showed respect for others’ choices — creating a rich and unique experience thanks to their own openness.

Jazz – Relaxing Melodies Soothe Moods
The Healing Arts jazz musician regularly performs Monday mornings and Monday afternoons during nurse shift changes. When these shift changes occur, residents tend to be more erratic and unsettled. Yet residents and staff alike have said how much they love the music — and, in fact, miss it when it’s not playing. When one resident — who sits quietly, proudly, in the back — came back to attend a session after missing several, he told the artist, “I haven’t been out to see you lately because I’ve been sick.” The residents show their ties to the Healing Arts team.

Movement – Flowing Bodies, Shifting Mindsets
One of the Shibashi movement teachers expressed how over time, participation in her class has increased — and so has the intention and openness. In one of her recent classes, Mr. B, who does not have much mobility and can’t move his hands, offered his foot instead of his hand to say thank you. Another resident, used to be considered as having a more negative attitude, told the instructor, “The purpose of an artist is not to come with judgment, but with creativity.”
Evolution of the Phillips Collection Partnership

Since the beginning of the partnership with the Phillips Collection, participation has increased from both Veterans and staff members. In the last Phillips Collection session, 13 Veterans attended the pre-visit session at the CLC, where they engaged in an hour-long discussion of George Luks’s, “Otis Skinner as Col. Philippe Bridau,” 1919. Three Veterans then joined the visit to the Phillips Collection, where they viewed Heinrich Campendonk’s “Village Street,” 1919. When the Phillips Collection staff came back to the CLC for a follow-up session, 5 Veterans attended, along with several staff members. This session was designed to re-create or create works inspired by the Village street session. Several staff attended. Now with staff attending, they are more connected to the mission of the Healing Arts program – and this connection has helped enhance their communication with residents outside of Healing Arts activities.

QUANTITY: CAPTURING SUCCESS IN NUMBERS

The Healing Arts team can share numerous heart-warming stories. But now, the team can begin to highlight successes via better program tracking tools and metrics that were developed by Healing Arts team members. These metrics can be used in several ways, including to showcase and urge replication of the Healing Arts program in other facilities, and for auditing purposes.

Capturing Resident Participation: Healing Arts Activity Database

Until recently, the CLC staff used a shared staff calendar to coordinate and document resident activity participation. However, the Healing Arts team analyzed the current processes and determined that while the calendar is helpful for displaying activities, it was not an effective method for capturing resident participation. The team looked at best practices for participant tracking. Keeping in mind limited resources and ease of upkeep and maintenance, the team determined that the best solution was to create a database using Microsoft Excel.

Database Development

To build a database that would be easy for Healing Arts members – and in the future, other CLC staff members – to sustain, the team developed an internal work plan for ensuring data security, data quality, and user functionality. The existing method for capturing and tracking CLC resident participation was on paper-based spreadsheet calendars with activity dates on the (x axis) and resident information on the (y axis). Under this method, residents in attendance were marked on the corresponding activity date by the activity coordinator and subsequently aggregated and stored with the CLC activity coordinator. Following the development of an internal work plan for the database development, the team worked directly with the CLC activity coordinator to analyze resident attendance data from August 2014 through July 2015.

Data Security

To safeguard confidential patient information, a unique identification number (UID) was randomly assigned to each resident and a secure master list was generated for the CLC activity coordinator. The purpose of the master list was to allow the CLC activity coordinator to map and view data at the individual resident level following the analysis.
Data Quality
To ensure data quality, the paper-based spreadsheet calendars for August 2014 through July 2015 were cross-referenced with the shared calendar produced by CLC staff. All activities listed on the shared CLC staff calendar for the selected time frame were entered into the database. Additionally, any recorded resident activity attendance for unlisted activity dates, were entered into the database. Using this process, the team was able to reduce risks of human-error in the paper-based data collection process.

User Functionality
To make sure the database is simple to use, the team developed separate worksheet tabs for each activity. The spreadsheet format was standardized for all activities and includes resident UID numbers in Column A and Activity Dates in Row 1. The standardization and formatting allows worksheet tabs to be added or deleted depending on the user’s need.

Database Daily Management
There are several ways to manage and update the database on a daily basis depending on CLC staff technology capabilities, time, and training. Based on the team’s experience in creating the tool, an optimal strategy would be for CLC to have a single individual responsible for aggregating and updating the database. This individual would ideally be the CLC activity coordinator. The activity leaders could continue tracking resident attendance and participation using the paper-based calendars and following the activities’ conclusion, these calendars could be submitted to the CLC activity coordinator for entering into the database. This method could potentially create an administrative burden on the CLC activity coordinator, however additional methods should be explored.

Tables, Graphs, & Reporting
The Healing Arts Activity database has significant potential to generate numerous tables and graphs that are useful for dash boarding and visualizing resident activity attendance. Specifically, graphs focusing on average resident attendance and activity attendance frequency. The database allows for determination of several numerical parameters which include total resident count, total activities held, activity attendance (by activity), total attendees possible (by activity), total number of times the activity was held (by activity), and average attendance (by activity). Additionally, these numerical counts can be viewed monthly and annually which enables trend analysis and graphical overlay by metric of interest.

3. PROGRAM METRICS AND FINDINGS
Using the Healing Arts Activity database, the team calculated a comprehensive set of statistics for the time frame analyzed and developed a Healing Arts Activity Statistics Workbook. These statistics were then used to generate various graphs of interest to CLC staff. The Healing Arts Activity Statistics Workbook contains 8 worksheets:

1. Table of Contents
2. Data Set
3. Attendance Average
4. Attendance Total
TRENDS
There were interesting and helpful trends that emerged during the analysis. The team collected data for all residents during the timeframe analyzed and this enabled the sample size to be significant for the analysis and for determining trends. The team was able to calculate high level averages that were of interest to CLC team members:

- Average Number of Resident Annually (96.8 Residents)
- Average Number of Activities Annually (20.58 Activities)
- Average Jazz Attendance Annually (71.5 Residents or 16.2% of Total Residents)
- Average Tai Chi Attendance Annually (47.9 Residents or 5.7% of Total Residents)
- Average Art Attendance Annually (28.7 Residents or 3.6% of Total Residents)

It is important to note that these averages include residents who are bed-ridden and potentially incapable of attending an activity on a specified date. Additionally, these averages include residents receiving palliative care, physical therapy, and long term care which could alter the analysis by reducing the parameter of “total attendees possible”. The status of the resident and intended length of stay is not currently measured by the CLC staff and this was identified and discussed with CLC staff as a potential measurement area going forward. The benefit of these averages are highly strategic and would help inform decision makers about high-impact activities based on number of residents attending and what percent of total residents are attending certain activities.

GRAPHS

The average resident attendance graph provides a high-level visual display of average resident attendance for each activity by month.

It’s important to note that the activity dates are not normalized by month in this graph, however if a normalized activity overlay is added, the number of Jazz Activities held on average annually is 4.6 times, the number of Tai Chi Activities held on average annually is 8.5 times, and the number of Art Studio Activities held on average annually is 8.1 times. This graph provides a base layer that when overlaid, would show average resident attendance by activity per month compared to a normalized average.
resident attendance by activity per month. This normalization would potentially allow CLC staff to determine the appropriate number of times to hold an activity based on the highest impact.

Snapshot of Resident Attendance by Activity

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking forward, the team recommends that the Healing Arts Program continues to offer its current programs, and, depending on resources, seek ways to further operationalize healing arts activities and increase participation. Specifically, priorities in the next year should continue to align with the Healing Arts Statement of Work Objectives (See Appendix). Team members should:

- Work with other CLC staff to develop processes to ensure the residents join the activities they want to attend. This may include:
  - Develop a “menu” for residents to fill out when they join the CLC – or even if they are already residents
  - Create a system to notate which activities residents want to join and clearly/quickly communicate that information to staff;
- Use the Healing Arts Activities Database to capture attendance in all Healing Arts Activities;
- Share Activities Database with other activity teams to capture attendance/data for other activities;
- Build partnerships with additional institutions and organizations;
- Examine opportunities and provide recommendations to secure regular volunteers to play music and support other healing arts activities where possible;
- Begin outreach and sharing program best practices with other VA facilities; and
- Increase activities that are available to staff in addition to Veterans.

CONSIDERATIONS

For all of the above recommendations, to ensure sustained success, it will be necessary for team members to:

- Communicate with leadership across Departments/Teams to ensure leadership buy-in and support;
- Engage in continuing conversations and communications so all relevant staff are included in changes; and
- Prioritize activities based on current contract and staffing resources.
## 5. APPENDIX – STATEMENT OF WORK OBJECTIVES

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<tr>
<th>Objective &amp; Deliverable</th>
<th>Metrics</th>
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| 1. Community Living Center staff will utilize a shared Resident Centered Activity/Event electronic Calendar to schedule and document resident events and activities. Include resident participation. Deliverable: Electronic activity/ event calendar | a) >90% of Veterans engaged in activity/event each week unless preference documented otherwise  
b) >95% scheduled activities on electronic calendar  
c) <10% cancellation of scheduled activities residents and staff informed of scheduling changes with %95 certainty |
| 2. Collaboration with CLC team members, including Capitol View Volunteer Corps volunteers to ensure all residents are engaged in at least one supplemental activity/event each week, either one to one or in a group Deliverable: Monthly participation report | a) Individualized plan of care identifies:  
i. At least one opportunity for creative expression  
ii. At least one opportunity for one to one or group interaction  
iii. At least one opportunity for community engagement within 1 month of admission to the CLC and at quarterly IDT  
b) Surveyors (Joint Commission) will identify resident, staff and volunteer engagement in resident-centered activities and creative expression as a program/facility strength - Surveyors will be able to use “attendance and reporting room list” |
| 3. Confirm delivery of routinely scheduled creative and expressive arts programs that address each dimension of the whole person - body, mind and spirit Deliverable(s): Program Handbook Volunteer Training Handbook N/A Surveying Veterans about MBS options upon admission (part of handbook) | • Residents will be afforded routinely scheduled creative and expressive arts programs that address each dimension of the whole person-body, mind, and spirit  
• Activities will be designed, planned, and scheduled in accordance with resident’s preferences and feedback  
• Unique characteristics, interest, and/or elements of each residents personal story will be identified and communicated among staff and between team members within one month of admission to the CLC |
| 4. Develop and produce an instruction manual that outlines recommended steps and timelines to ensure sustainability of the CLC Capitol View Gallery with three exhibitions of featured art selections Deliverable(s): CLC Art Exhibition Manual and Planning Tool | Rotation of CLC gallery 3 times per year |
| 5. Develop a plan detailing the process, procedures, recruitment and or training of providers to implement a bedside art cart program to support creative engagement of seriously ill and bedfast residents Deliverable: Art Cart | a) Personal space of Veterans will provide privacy and reflect creative and aesthetic personalization |
| 6. LC professional caregivers and volunteers will practice self-care and build spirit de corps by engaging in creative/expressive arts interventions: (1) in participation with residents and (2) in staff focused sessions scheduled quarterly and across shifts *Deliverable: Records of increase Staff Participation | >75% participation of staff and volunteers in creative expression as participants joining with residents in at least one creative/expressive activity biannually – in progress |
| 7. Provide consistent administrative support to CVVC volunteers to foster integrity and continuity of services that promote resident-centered care and provide 1-1 and/or group engagement in meaningful activities, including creative/expressive arts *Deliverable: Volunteer Management system | a) CVVC protocols and processes, including CLC Arts in Health and Healing protocols and processeses, will provide volunteers with predictable and consistent administrative support to enhance program sustainability and replication  
b) 100% growth of CVVC over contract year  
c) Outreach and recruitment from DC VAMC Veteran community – increase “Veterans Serving Veterans” by 50% over contract year |
| 8. Documentation of program elements -plans processes and SWOT analysis prior to close of contract in one year and with each option year that follows Deliverable: Documentation of program elements | |
| 9. Explore and develop partnerships with academic and community institution to fortify sustainability of the CLC healing and creative arts program and the CLC volunteer corps. Deliverable: Partnerships | • Successful marketing and hosting of annual Veterans History Project training for community hospice volunteers |