

**“It makes my life worthwhile.”**  
*Residents helping residents live purposeful lives*



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## Co-Authors

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## Disclosure

- Kristine Theurer is founder of Java Group Programs, Inc., presents at conferences and to organizations and receives financial remuneration for trainings and program materials

# **POLL: What field do you represent?**

**(Choose one of the answers in the next slide; if your answer is other, feel free to type the answer into the chat window)**

**POLL: What percentage of residents on average do you think report feeling lonely?**

# Loneliness and Depression in Residential Senior Care

- Long term care—55% experience loneliness<sup>1</sup>
- Loneliness and depression are linked<sup>5</sup>
- Assisted living—higher depressive symptoms (58%) than community (19%)<sup>2</sup>
- Retirement—21% depression and 19% loneliness<sup>3-4</sup>



**“No one should suffer alone.”**

**POLL: What do you think would be the most effective way to reduce loneliness?**



# **A social revolution**

**peer support**

**give more**

**live more**

# Peer Support



Members use the power of their own experience and of their own wounds to lighten the burden of others, and heal themselves in the process.

— *Stephen Post (2011)*

# Java Music Club



## Standardized Peer Support Group

- themes
- photos
- readings
- music
- talking stick

## Java Memory Care



“I am amazed at how residents with dementia have responded... short, simple, yet profound answers.”

*Hilary Lipsett, Staff*

# The Java Mentorship Program



# The Purpose



1. To help residents be able to reach out to those that are lonely or isolated
2. To improve quality of life through building a sense of purpose and meaningful relationships

# Program Structure

Hour 1  
Team Meeting



Mentors

Facilitators  
(Staff)

# 6 Education Modules

*(4-5 weekly sessions in each)*

1. Introductory module
2. Keys to happiness
3. Marvelous mentors
4. Beyond dementia
5. Worry busters
6. Purpose in life





# Program Structure

Hour 2  
The Visits

Mentors

Those being  
visited



# Java Mentorship Research Study

WHERE?



- BRAMPTON | The Village of Sandalwood Park
- ETOBICOKE | The Village of Humber Heights
- GUELPH | The Village of Riverside Glen
- HAMILTON | The Village of Wentworth Heights
- KITCHENER | The Village of Winston Park
- LONDON | The Village of Glendale Crossing
- MISSISSAUGA | The Village of Erin Meadows
- WHITBY | The Village of Taunton Mills
- WINDSOR | The Village of Aspen Lake
- WINDSOR | The Village at St. Clair

## WHO?

Care Homes (n=10)  
Staff (n = 24)

Mentors  
(n = 105)

Visitees  
(n = 86)

## WHO

Care Homes (n=10)  
Staff (n = 24)

Mentors  
(n = 105)

Visitees  
(n = 86)

## WHAT?

Impact of program

Depression  
Loneliness  
Social identity  
Belonging/Purpose

## WHO

Care Homes (n=10)  
Staff (n = 27)

Mentors  
(n = 116)

Visitees  
(n = 82)

## WHAT

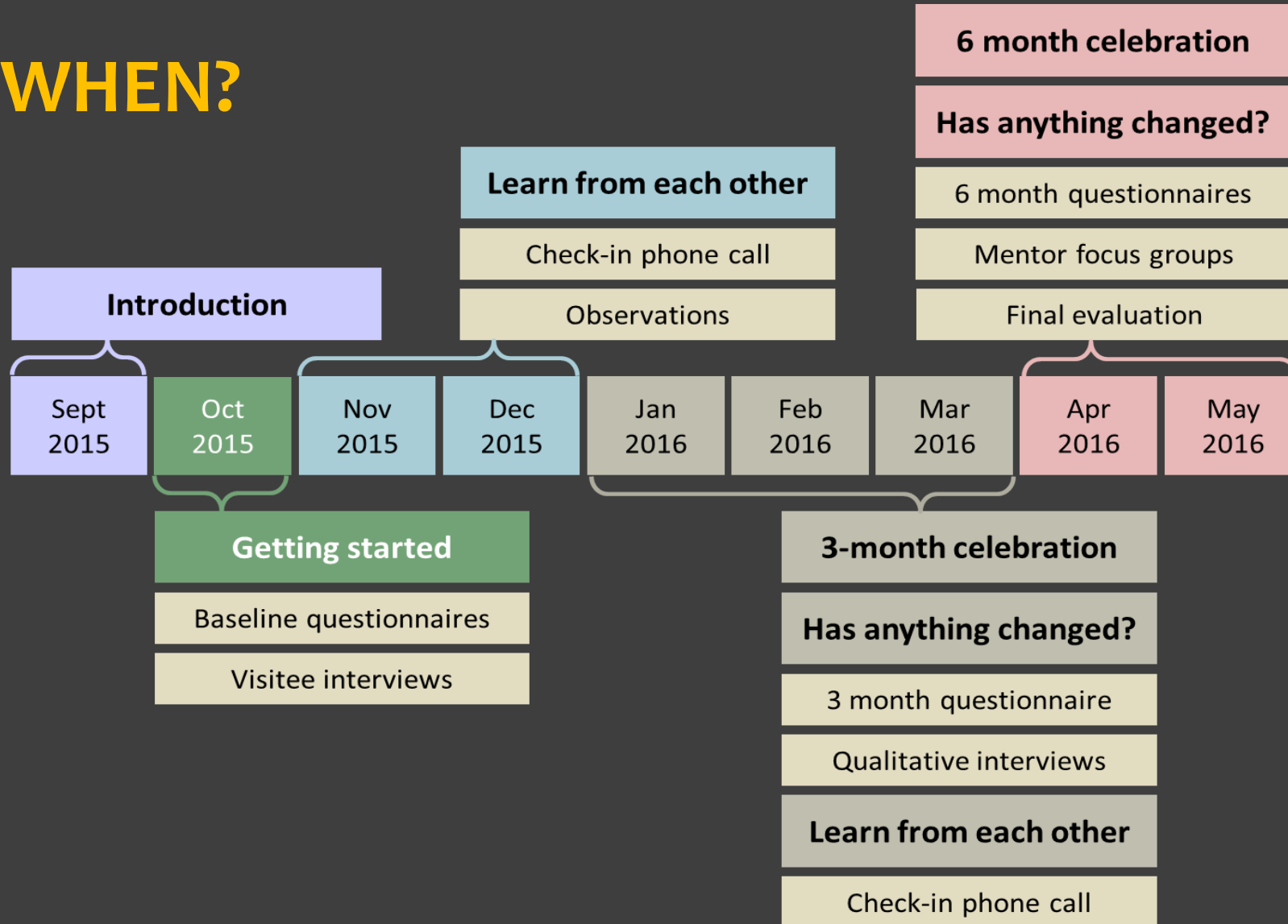
Impact of program

Depression  
Loneliness  
Social Identity  
Belonging/Purpose

## HOW?

Surveys  
Clinical tools  
Focus groups  
Interviews  
Observations

# WHEN?



Preliminary Results

## Internal Mentors

### Internal mentors enjoy meeting and helping others

*“I enjoy ... instead of pulling them out of themselves, ... you know, they’re sometimes mentally in a small place. When somebody goes in to visit, it pulls them out of that little small place.”*

### They find visits to be mutually beneficial

*“Jack is happy for what I’m doing. Jack is the guy I look after. It’s making me feel good. I enjoy the program since I started. It makes me feel like I’m a different person.”*

Preliminary Results

## External Mentors

### External mentors find visits mutually beneficial too

*“I’m not just helping, I’m also learning...I feel like I have a group of friends.”*

### Having resources to help guide the visits is important

*“I’m actually really excited about it. It really helped because instead of just coming here blindly, and saying ‘Ok, just go and be with them’... they give you lots of tips and tricks .”*



Preliminary Results

## Visitees

**The pairing up for visits helps to make the visits a positive experience**

*“I’ve never had one resident that really didn’t want to say hello or respond. I would say that’s because we work as a team.”*

*“I like seeing a smile on their faces when you are there, and they talk like they’ve never talked before.”*



Preliminary Results

## Visitees – Quantitative Data

- Reduced symptoms of depression ( $p = 0.02$ )
- Reduced loneliness ( $p = 0.02$ )
- 60% increased numbers of programs attended



# Challenges



- Mentors are busy
- Scheduling challenges
- Need to create a back-up visatee list
- Visiting a highlight of the program





*“I’m 95—it gives me  
a new lease on life.*

*It makes my life  
worthwhile.”*



Pat Bell, Resident

Village of Aspen Lake  
Windsor, Ontario



# A Team Meeting in Action





# Our Guidelines

- The primary purpose of the Java Mentorship Program is to build a warm inclusive community and to support those who are lonely or isolated.
- In our community, everyone matters, everyone counts.
- We build trust by sharing openly and keeping what is shared confidential.
- We value each person on our mentorship team.
- We are also here to learn and to have fun.
- We have one guiding principle, and that is—loving kindness.

# The Mentor's Pledge

**As a mentor in the Java Mentorship Program, I pledge:**

- to attend meetings as often as I can
- to help with set-up and clean-up as much as I'm able
- to encourage and support new team members
- to do my best to help others and practice gratitude daily
- to listen to other's sharing with an open mind and give them my attention
- to invite others to attend the Java Mentorship or Java Music Club programs
- to share my experience and optimism
- to express kindness and appreciation

# Check in and the Gratitude Practice

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.

It turns what we have into enough, and more.

It turns denial into acceptance,  
chaos to order, confusion to clarity.

It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home,  
a stranger into a friend.

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today  
and creates a vision for tomorrow.

—Melodie Beattie

# What Is A Mentor?

- A mentor is someone who is willing to reach out and support others on a regular basis.
- Through sharing their own experience, mentors help those they visit help themselves.

# Education – The Role of a Mentor

- What a mentor does

- What a mentor doesn't do

## Closing Affirmation

- Together we can really make a difference!
- Need an ear, need a hug?  
... see me.



**We'd love to hear from you!**

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- <sup>3</sup>Adams, K. B., Sanders, S., & Auth, E. A. (2004). Loneliness and depression in independent living retirement communities: Risk and resilience factors. *Aging & Mental Health, 8*(6), 475-485. doi: 10.1080/13607860410001725054
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