# Self-Esteem in Older Adults Integrated to the Grandparent Circle

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## Abstract

The research presented is focused on the problem situation generated by the limitations presented by older adults integrated into the grandparent's circle in relation to self-esteem and aims to: Design a system of group dynamics to promote adequate self-esteem in adults elderly belonging to the grandfather circle of the El Valle community in the Granma province. For the realization of the objective, a population of 15 is taken, to which a diagnosis is applied on the problem under investigation. The results allow verifying that more than 80% of the sample have low levels of self-esteem and based on the limitations found, the group dynamics system is designed that justifies the potential of group work.

*Keywords: Self-Esteem; Group Dynamics; Elderly; Grandfather Circle*

## Introduction

Multiple authors, including, Galván, Soberats; García and Oliva [1] they argue that in the past old age was interpreted as a synonym for illness, weakness, loss of the ability to work, associated with involutionary theories. However, today the older man has become an important figure in the social order, many specialists place him in a conflictive stage, not only for those who live it, but for the professionals who are dedicated to it: doctors, psychologists, social workers, etc., in addition to family, friends and neighbors.

In this way, there are varied points of view that are used in order to characterize the elderly. Thus, for Developmental Psychology, this period has received different names: older adult, late adulthood, third age or old age, and comprises, approximately, the period between 60 and 80 years, since 80 years are spoken today as a fourth age, which indicates a prolongation and increase in the average life span.

In this same order, Llanes [2] refers that the Developmental Psychology supported by LS Vigostky's Cultural Historical School, explains, analyzes this age from a developmental perspective that distinguishes this stage of life and characterizes the new psychological structures in which the role of the «other» is fundamental for the achievement of such neoformations.

For its part, the World Health Organization WHO [3] refers that older adulthood is a stage of human development that begins at age 60 and ends at the moment in which the person dies, it is characterized by being a period of great changes in all areas of operation.

Consistent with it, Ojeda [4] consider that a As age increases, the differences between individuals increase, and it is that aging is linked to a wide and diverse number of historical-social circumstances in which the past life has passed, and it is they that influence the configuration of certain patterns about old age and how to cope with it.

Although the prevalence of the conception of old age based on deterioration and the pathological is recurrent, in recent decades a positive position has been appreciated from which the wide variability of manifestations with which people assume old age and at the same time has concluded that the only possible way to go through this stage is to advance in the knowledge and deepening of the personal resources that each one has to face the challenges of life.

It would then be very appropriate to consider aging as a process in which not only the biological change of the organism becomes noticeable but, above all, an enormous variability of differences in the patterns in the different processes, psychological functions are included; as well as behaviors.

In principle, older people show changes in the conjunctive functions that are manifested, as it takes longer to respond to the information they receive compared to solving the tasks that are demanded of them and the decline in the phases of information processing retention is evident. or memory. At the same time, there are changes in emotional function.

Consequently, old age brings with it a series of conflictive situations and events that will produce negative affective reactions in individuals such as depression, loneliness, discomfort, in short, suffering. However, one of the aspects that most affects the elderly is their psychological self-perception in the face of the demands of today's society, and the way they face the reality of their aging, which is directly related to self-esteem.

In this sense, there are multiple researchers who have developed research on the role that self-esteem plays in the elderly for quality of life related to health, among them: Cardona [5], Ojeda [4], Pizarro [6], Gross and Suárez [7], Metsäpelto., *et al.* [8], WHO [9].

In general, these researchers agree that self-esteem is considered a psychological variable that is part of the socio-emotional development of the elderly and when it is favorable it will enhance the ability to develop skills and increase the level of personal security, on the other hand, when it is low it can come to focus the person towards defeat as well as failure, bringing alterations on an emotional level (eg, Depression, Anxiety), withdrawal and isolation from peers.

These manifestations may be associated with the way in which the adult assumes retirement and retirement as a situation of loss and handicap, or a possibility of experiencing social marginalization, feeling that they no longer have much of it, which leads to loss of meaning or meaning of life. In this framework, authors such as: Medina Espejo [10], argue that the urgency of developing tools that favor the quality of life of the elderly in all its dimensions is clear, in order to contribute from the theoretical and practical knowledge to the understanding of the problems of the elderly from an interdisciplinary perspective that contributes to the creation of conditions to enhance the psychological well-being of people who are going through this stage of life and to provide active aging.

In this sense, a permanent call for reflection on the energizing resources of health, development and psychological well-being of older adults, has led several authors, during the last decade, to recognize the role of activities physical-recreational activities, the stimulation of social interaction and the stimulation of positive emotions as resources to develop a healthy and happy life.

From these references, the circles of grandparents they represent a genuinely Cuban experience on the application of health promotion criteria, mainly in their capacity to stimulate the recovery of physical capacities, sociability and autonomy. Through them, actions such as social self-help and the incorporation of the elderly into socially productive tasks are carried out that improve the use of their time budget and their social self-image.

However, despite the value of the research carried out in the context of grandparents' circles that have shown the benefits of practicing physical-recreational activities in all spheres of behavior and decisively on the quality of life of these people, meaningful participation is not always achieved, which is perceived by the person as beneficial and that allows them to share thoughts, emotions, feelings and experiences, the strengthening of social, family and community ties to promote the health and lifestyles of old age.

That is why the work carried out in this sense is considered insufficient, if the incomprehension of the family and society is taken into account, which sometimes limit, due to overprotection and in others due to underestimation, the activities of the elderly, turning them into entities inactive, quiet and lonely.

The foregoing confirms that there are still dissatisfactions related to the work of sports teachers, who with their work do not have all the resources to turn the functioning of grandparents circles into a true space of self-realization for subjects of this age and reverse the

recurring feeling of not being taken into account, not being needed, not serving, which is translated as time goes by, in abandonment, depressive behaviors, personal untidiness, anger and anger for no apparent reason, which is related to one of the most marked difficulties from the psychological point of view in the elderly (self-esteem).

These insufficiencies make it possible to declare the following scientific problem: how to promote adequate self-esteem in older adults integrated into the grandparent circle?

To solve the scientific problem raised, the research objective is established: to design a system of group dynamics to promote adequate self-esteem in older adults belonging to the grandparent circle of the El Valle community in Granma province.

## Materials and Methods

To carry out the research, a sample of 15 older adults was intentionally taken belonging to the grandfather circle of the El Valle community in the Granma province, who have low self-esteem. Methods of the theoretical level are used: analytical - synthetic; empirical: interviews with teachers, review and consultation of official documents, observations made on physical and recreational activities and measurement via the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and statisticians - mathematicians: descriptive statistics.

## Results and Discussions

The investigation starts from a factual diagnosis that allows to verify the following regularities:

1.  Discontent on the part of older adults with their body and social image, which is expressed in rejection and maladjustment to old age.

2.  Loss of autonomy and changes in thought, affectivity or daily behavior.

3.  Processes of isolation or reduction of human relationships, when taking refuge in solitude.

4.  Absence of aptitudes and attitudes for the performance of a certain role. (Loss of their social role).

5.  Poor support and understanding of the family to solve the problems of loneliness that these elderly people have.

6.  The knowledge of teachers regarding the use of tasks, methods and means to address the limitations that arise around inappropriate manifestations of self-esteem in older adults is limited.

7.  The physical activity program for the elderly, although it refers to the importance of creating a state of favorable mental predisposition, as a guiding document does not define what actions the teacher must take to achieve adequate self-esteem, nor does it refer to any psychological instrument to diagnose the behavior of this.

Based on these limitations, the group dynamics system is designed to promote adequate self-esteem in older adults belonging to the grandparent circle of the El Valle community in Granma province.

In this sense, the group dynamics system is based on postulates of positive psychology from the following dimensions:

1.  Cognitive

2.  Affective - Motivational.

3.  Volitional.

4.    Metacognitive

**How is my current situation?**

**Objective:** To help older adults to discover which of the four areas of life is most meaningful to them at the present time, in order to develop objectives, activities and needs for change within their current situation in each area.

**Group size:** Unlimited.

**Time required:** 15 minutes.

**Material:** A Questionnaire "How is my current situation?" for each participant.

**Place:** Large and well-lit room, set up so that participants can write.

**Developing:**

I.      The sports teacher distributes to the participants the questionnaires How is my current situation?, one for each participant.

II.     Ask for volunteers who want to comment on their results in the group.

III.    Ask the participants to make final comments on the exercise.

## Positive self concept

**Objective:** To demonstrate that it is acceptable to express orally the positive qualities that one possesses.

**Group size:** 20 participants.

**Time required:** 15 minutes.

**Venue**: A large room that allows participants to sit and comment.

**Developing:**

I.      The group of grandparents is divided in two. Each one is invited to write on a sheet of paper four or five things that they really like in themselves. Most people are usually very modest and hesitate to write something nice about themselves; some encouragement from the teacher may be needed. For example, you may "spontaneously" reveal the person's list of qualities, such as enthusiastic, honest in attitude, serious, intelligent, likable).

II.     After 3 - 4 minutes, ask each grandparent to share the concepts they wrote with their partner.

III.    Some questions will be applied to them for their reflection: Did you feel embarrassed with this activity? Why? (Our culture has conditioned us not to reveal our "egos" to others, even if it is is valid to do so). Were you honest with yourself, that is, did you not elaborate on your character traits? What reaction did you get from your partner when he revealed his strengths to you? (for example, surprise, encouragement, reinforcement).

## Give and receive affection

**Objective:** To experience the problems related to giving and receiving affection.

**Time required:** Thirty minutes.

**Material:** Paper and pencil.

**Venue:** A room large enough with chairs to accommodate all participating members.

**Developing:**

I.      The teacher introduces the exercise, saying that for most people, both giving and receiving affection is a very difficult matter. To help people experience difficulty, a method called heavy bombardment is used.

II.     The older adults in the group will tell the person who is the focus of all the positive feelings they have towards them. She only hears.

III.    The intensity of the experience can vary in different ways, Probably the simplest way is to make the person in question come out of the circle and have his back to the group, listening to what is said, or he can stay in the group and speak to him directly.

IV.     The impact is strongest when everyone stands in front of the person, touches them, looks them in the eye and speaks directly to them.

V.      At the end there will be an exchange of comments about the experience

## Assertive rights

**Objective:**

I.      Develop the possibilities of self-knowledge and assertive exercise of self-confidence.

II.     It encourages the participant to explore self-affirmation, its scope and limits.

**Time required:** 60 minutes.

**Material:** Sheets and pencils for each participant. Sheet "Assertive Rights: I have the right" for each participant. Sheet "Assertive Rights: Others have the Right to receive from me".

**Venue:** A spacious, well-lit room that allows participants to gather in groups.

**Developing:**

I.      Participants are asked to individually identify the rights they believe they have in family, work and society.

II.     Subgroups are formed and they are asked to try to highlight, with the contributions of each participant, at least five rights that the subgroups believe they have in the family, the workplace and the social.

III.    When they finish, the subgroup conclusions are read asking for the dark points to be clarified.

IV.     The professor then requests that since they managed to determine these rights, they go on to determine those that they believe the members of their families, their work and society have.

V.      The previous process is repeated and conclusions are reached.

## Discovering my needs and motivation

**Objective:**

I.        Self-discovery of personal motives.

II.       Sensitizes the participant in the assertive use of personal safety through self-assessment.

**Time required:** 45 minutes.

**Material:** White sheets, flip chart, pencils and markers.

**Place:** A sufficiently spacious and well-lit room.

**Developing:**

I.        The teacher asks the participants to identify individually what are the elements or facts that provide them security in the family, work and society (at least five in each area), and to express it in writing on sheets letter size.

II.       The next step is to form teams of 4 or 5 people asking them to reach subgroup conclusions and write them down on sheets that are hung on the walls when finished.

III.      The teacher then proceeds to tabulate them according to the concepts of A. Maslow's pyramid of needs, counting and obtaining percentages of each one of them.

IV.     Reflection is encouraged and it is about reaching conclusions.

## Double personality

**Goals:**

I.        Raise awareness of the changing nature of self-esteem.

II.       Identify your own states of high and low self-esteem and the circumstances or causes that cause one and the other.

**Group size:** 30 participants.

**Time required:** Approximately 30 minutes.

**Material:** Sheets and pencil for each participant.

**Venue:** A room large enough to allow participants to write and meet in groups.

**Developing:**

I.        Explain to participants the fluctuations of self-esteem, sometimes dramatically within each person and often during the course of the same day. This exercise is to identify these experiences and gain control over them.

II.       On a page divided by a vertical line, write on the left side how you feel, think, and act when you are good about yourself. On the right side, how you feel, think and act when you are bad about yourself.

III.     Participants should be asked to observe these two states as part of themselves, to give each part with their imagination a name that you can symbolize them.

IV.     Share in groups of three or four what was written, try to identify the type of situations, experiences, people or events that affect to raise or lower your self-esteem. Specify what makes you feel good or bad about yourself.

V.     At the end you should carry out a "brainstorm" of ideas, using fantasy to suggest all possible ways to raise self-esteem.

**SAW:** The group is suggested to share the experiences and conclusions of this exercise with the whole group. Let it be clear what you have learned about your own self-esteem.

Once the group dynamics system in order to assess its practical application feasibility, is delivered to a group of specialists, with vast experience, knowledge and qualifications, who had to submit to a critical analysis the following aspects:

- Psychological and sociological foundations that support the proposal of the system of group dynamics system.

- Coherence between the objectives of the dynamics and their content.

- Coherence between the content of the dynamics and the ways or methods used.

- Level of satisfaction of the specialists with the structure of the dynamics (objectives, group size, time, place and development).

According to the criteria of the selected specialists, the aspects submitted for their evaluation were evaluated as very adequate, which implies that the psychological and sociological foundations constitute solid supports that justify the proposal of the system. of group dynamics, there is coherence between the objectives of the dynamics and their content and between the latter and the ways or methods used.

Specialists perceive a high level of satisfaction with the structure of the dynamics (objectives, group size, time, place and development), which allows confirming that the proposal has feasibility of application for the development of favoring adequate self-esteem in older adults under investigation.

## Conclusion

1.     The diagnosis made shows the limitations presented by the Older adults belonging to the grandfather circle of the El Valle community in Granma province to achieve adequate self-esteem.

2.     The designed system of activities is based on the systemic-structural-functional approach, and on the postulates of Tarragona, (2013). On positive psychology.

3.     The proposal of group dynamics system has application feasibility to promote adequate self-esteem in older adults belonging to the grandfather circle of the El Valle community in Granma province.

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