St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc.
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Project Description: Environmental Skill-Building Program

Evidenced -Based Solution & Project Description: The SJC Council on Aging has teamed up with Dr. Kurt Hubbard, OTD, OTR/L Assistant Professor from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences to offer Occupational Therapist student's clinical experience in caring for participants with dementia and their families by training them to deliver the Environmental Skill-Building Program (ESP) for caregivers of those with dementia. OT students will learn to develop strategies to improve the quality of life for both patient and caregiver. The program is based on the Environmental Skill Building Program (ESP) developed by Dr. Laura Gitlin at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, and includes 10 home visits for needs assessment, development of an action plan, and caregiver training. Dr. Laura Gitlin, will provide technical assistance and will develop a "Train the Trainer" model during her collaboration with the site.

Community Based Organization: The Council on Aging vision is to provide, "the opportunity for every person in St. Johns County to enjoy wellness, longevity and quality of life choices within a strong, healthy community. The St. Johns County Council on Aging, Inc. was founded in the fall of 1973 as a non-profit social services agency seeking to meet the needs of St. Johns County Elders. As their elder community continues to grow the COA continue to actively search for creative and innovative ways to encourage active aging; a healthy lifestyle, inspirational learning experiences and the opportunity to socialize in a fun, convenient and safe environment.

Target Population: Families caring for individuals with dementia who are located in St. Johns County, Florida will be recruited for the project. Approximately 20 – 30 families will receive the ESP intervention in the first year of the project. Year one outcomes will primarily focus on issues of implementation and ensuring fidelity. This will include translating all of the protocol forms and materials used in the original model, training staff, establishing a process for regular and ongoing supervision and monitoring. Expected outcomes for the caregivers participating in the project are enhanced quality of life, communication, self-efficacy, distress, beliefs, and healthy behavior.