

Social Work for Older Adults with Dementia

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LOCATION - SOUTH KOREA / SEOUL

South Korea is located in East Asia on the southern half of the Korean Peninsula.

Seoul is the capital and largest metropolis of South Korea.

OLDER ADULTS IN SOUTH KOREA

- The Korean National Statistical Office indicates that the number of Korean older adults aged 65 and over is 662,400 in 2015, but it will be over 17,990,000 in 2050 (2015).
- According to the Korean Alzheimer's Association, the number of older adults with dementia is 570,000 in 2013, and they will be 2,710,000 in 2050 (2013).

GLOBAL CONFERENCE

My global conference experience was at Social Work, Education and Social Development in Seoul of South Korea in 2016. A substantial number of social workers who work and study at international social work institutions, councils, and universities participated in the conference to discuss and share Social Protection, Poverty, Health and Mental Health, Human Trafficking, Interpersonal Violence, Human Rights, Child Welfare, Disability, Gender Equality, Ageing, Sustainability, Population Change, Migration, Labor, Education and Training, Disaster and Environmental Change, Social Work Practice, Community Development, Social Action, International Social Work, Safety, Corporate Social Responsibility, Housing, Criminal Justice, and Human Service Technology.

OUTCOMES

Participating in SWSD 2016 conference for four days, I grabbed the opportunity to observe diverse practical social work skills for older adults with dementia. Moreover, I had the chance to engage with many social workers who work not only at fields but also at universities. Thus, I definitely gained more knowledge of 1) the important issue in terms of the increased number of people with dementia, 2) the important role of community, and 3) effectiveness of art and music therapy.

SKILLS DEVELOPED

Through the global conference experience, I improved my ability to:

- Appropriately utilize comparative data observation among countries.
- Apply various social work skills that are able to improve physical and psychological ability for older adults with dementia.
- Energetically engage and communicate with social workers and professors who have various cultural and linguistic background.

CONNECTIONS

Class Room:

- SW616: Adulthood and Aging
This course helped me understand how older adults develop psychosocially and change across their lifespan. Especially, I am strongly interested in how social interaction affects health condition of formal and informal caregivers for older adults. This course allowed me to prepare deeper background knowledge.

- Career: The SWSD 2016 provides a substantial number of therapeutic approach for people with dementia. Thus, I had the opportunity to learn knowledge of how geriatric social workers in different countries deal with dementia patients in order to alleviate their symptoms.

LESSONS LEARNED

- One of the most important issues in relation to gerontology in the world is the increased number of older adults with dementia.
- Social interaction with formal and informal caregivers helps dementia patients mitigate their symptoms.
- Various therapeutic programs, utilizing art and music, for dementia patients in adult daycare center show effectiveness to alleviate their symptoms.

ADVICES

- Read many articles and books in terms of therapeutic methods in the field of social work and social interaction of dementia patients.
- Understand different social welfare system between the US and Korea.

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