

The Midlife Memory Programme

A multiple case study evaluation of a group-based memory programme for healthy middle-aged individuals.

G.B Scheibner & J.M. Leathem

Massey University – Wellington – New Zealand



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Background

- The literature shows that significant memory decline begins during midlife which is usually defined as the period of life between of 40-65 years of age.
- 40 % of middle-aged people report everyday forgetfulness (Ponds, Commissaris, & Jolles, 1997).
- More than half of these people perceive their forgetfulness as a hindrance in their daily live.

Background

- 70% of individuals in this age-group have expressed worries about their increasing forgetfulness (Commissaris, Ponds, & Jolles, 1998).
- Memory interventions though are usually intended for individuals who are older than 65 years of age with mild to moderate memory impairment or for people with recognised neurological conditions such as TBI.

Programme

- The programme was offered as a service by Massey University's Psychology Clinic in Wellington New Zealand.
- The research presented here was conducted alongside the programme.
- Six weekly sessions of 90 minutes duration.
- Facilitated by a clinical psychologist and a post-graduate student.
- The fee for programme participation was 116 Euro for a total of 9 hours of treatment.
- All clients agreed to take part in the research study.

Programme Content

Treatment Modules:

- Memory goal selection and pursuit
- Group discussions about everyday memory experiences
- Memory and ageing education
- Memory strategy training

Programme content

1. Memory goal

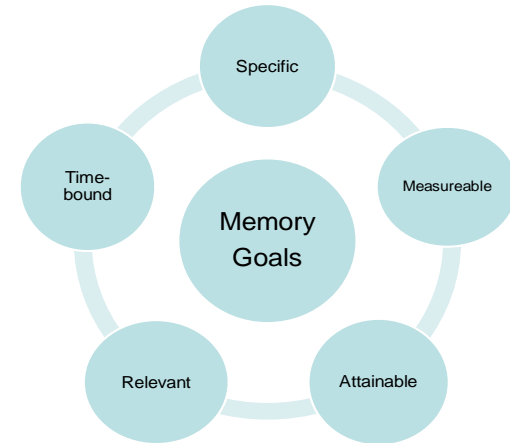
selection and pursuit:

- Examples: Names, lists, misplaced items, appliances, doors, etc.

2. Group discussions

about everyday memory experiences

- Comprehensive memory training programmes that facilitate group discussions have been shown to obtain higher training gains than programmes without them (Verhaeghen et al., 1992).
- Use of memory diaries to facilitate discussions



Programme content

3. Memory and ageing education

- Memory systems and processes
 - Sensory, Short-term/Long-term memory
 - Role of attention: Selective, divided, sustained
 - Encoding , storage, retrieval (free recall/recognition)
 - Levels of processing (shallow/deep)
- Normal and pathological memory changes
 - Normative changes: What to expect during midlife?
 - Pathological changes: Dementias (Risk factors and protective factors)

Programme content

3. Memory and ageing education

- Contextual influences on memory performance
 - Perceptual abilities, the effects of medication and alcohol, mood, anxiety, stress , memory beliefs and stereotypes, relaxation, physical exercise, mental stimulation

4. Memory strategy training

- Chunking , visualisation, nametures, method of Loci, pegwords, errorless learning, acronyms, acrostics, stories, categorising, organising, external aids

Programme content

- Clients received a pre-programme information folder.
- Throughout each session various hand-outs were placed in the folder for future reference.

Memory Diary Example:

When did forgetting/remembering occur?	What happened? How worrying?	What did I do?
	1= not at all 10= very worrying	
Monday 7am	Colin's recall whether work meeting is today or tomorrow. Worried that I am not prepared for this if it is today.	Checked my diary. The meeting was not in the diary either today or tomorrow. Remembered that I told my wife about the meeting, so I ask her. She remembered that the meeting is on Monday next week. Noted the meeting in my diary and the wall planner.
Tuesday 1pm	Suddenly remembered that I was supposed to call John last night about phoning the trip for the weekend. Had to work late last night, not was annoyed because the computer crashed.	Called John right then.
Thursday 9pm	Was out for dinner with sports club. Mixed up names of two new members who joined as a month ago. Was a little embarrassed, thought I really should know by now. Had a few beers that evening, thought that night had something to do with it.	Tried to remember the names by listing...

EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
Diary
Most people use a diary of some type to keep track of events that are coming up. (and happened). Some will keep track to remember things that have already happened on the calendar. It is useful and likely to be more effective than notes of paper and being written.

EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
Making Notes
slow sticky notes/Outlines Filing

EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
Errorless learning: Learn it once, learn it right!
Errorless learning is a technique whereby your objective is to prevent yourself from making errors when initially learning information.

EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
Categorising / organising
To categorise information when you record it will greatly improve the retrieval rate of the information. As an example, you may need to get the following list of items from the shop later on today: Parsnips, Wheat, Washing up liquid, Ketchup, Mustard, Cheese, Milk, Lard, Onions, Paper towels, Beer, Hand soap, Yogurt, Orange Juice, and Baked Beans.

EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
Short Term Memory
If information concepts for the duration of a memory span is limited to about seven or 8 items you need to make a connection either:

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A.5.4
Phone Numbers
4759362 becomes 457 93 62 or 65 29 362

EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
Remembering Names
simultaneous techniques. Imagine you need to know 10 names you meet up with the following:


EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
These are all images that were easily generated but are much harder to forget than the actual items I needed to remember. Once I get home, I can extract my method of focus points to find the ones that remind me when I was asked to do and perhaps write it down then.

EXTERNAL AIDS
A.5.4
Names of People or Memory Groups
Windy
Tina
Diana
Marianne
Margaret

Programme structure

Session 1	Session2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
Introduction	Diary Discussion	Diary Discussion	Diary Discussion	Diary Discussion	Diary Discussion
Memory Goal Selection	Memory Systems & Processes	Normal & Pathological Memory Changes	Memory Goal Revision Contextual Determinants of Memory I	Contextual Determinants of Memory II	Review of Course Material
Strategy training	Strategy training	Strategy training	Strategy training	Strategy training	

Recruitment



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The Midlife Memory Programme

The Midlife Memory Programme is conducted by Massey University's Psychology Clinic and will be run between September and November 2010.

"Memory is the diary that we all carry about with us"
(Oscar Wilde)

Te Kūnenga ki Pūrehuroa

FORGETFULNESS IN MIDLIFE

Midlife is defined as the period of life between the ages of 40 and 65. Midlife can be particularly demanding as middle-aged individuals have to cope with the demands of their careers, parenthood, and often caring for aging parents. Many individuals in midlife experience an increase in forgetfulness and research has shown that most middle-aged people worry about this. The increase in forgetfulness can be due to aging-related factors, but factors such as a person's beliefs about memory and aging, stress, and mood may also play an important role. If you are middle-aged, and think that your memory is not as good as it used to be, you might be interested in the Midlife Memory Programme.

WHAT DOES THE MIDLIFE MEMORY PROGRAMME INVOLVE?

The Midlife Memory Programme was specifically designed to assist middle-aged individuals for whom forgetfulness might be a hindrance in their everyday life. The programme will be held in small groups (7-9 persons per group) and consists of six weekly evening meetings of 90 minutes duration. During the meetings participants will be trained in a variety of memory improvement techniques that have been scientifically proven to be effective. By the end of the programme participants will have the knowledge and skills to use their memory more effectively. In order to monitor each individual's progress, participants write a simple memory diary for the duration of the programme.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

- Week 1: Personal memory goal selection
Memory strategy training 1
- Week 2: Memory systems and processes
Memory strategy training 2
- Week 3: Memory and aging education
Memory strategy training 3
- Week 4: Contextual determinants of memory performance 1
Memory strategy training 4
- Week 5: Contextual determinants of memory performance 2
Memory strategy training 5
- Week 6: Review session

WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE PROGRAMME BE CONDUCTED?

The Midlife Memory Programme will be offered by Massey University's Psychology Clinic in Wellington. The programme will be conducted between September and November 2010. All up, four groups will be formed and each group will meet at one evening of the week. Early applicants may choose on what day of the week they wish to participate.

COSTS

Participation in the programme involves a fee of \$186 to cover instructor's time.

APPLICATION DETAILS

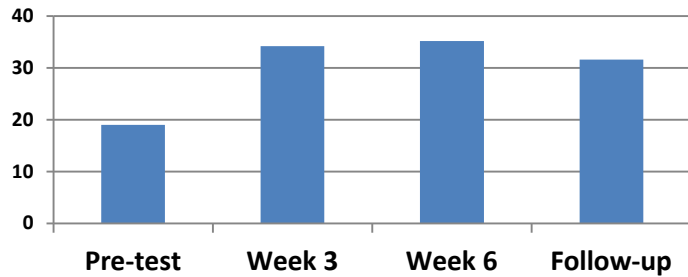
In the application details section, please add the phone number: 04 801 4981 extn 6101

Assessment

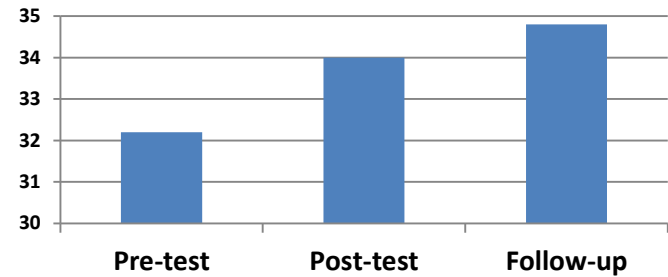
	Pre-test	Session 3	Session 6	Post-test	3 Month Follow-up
Memory Goal Attainment	●	●	●	●	●
Rivermead Behavioural Memory Test ¹	●	-	-	●	●
Memory Compensation Questionnaire ²	●	-	-	●	●
Memory Controllability Inventory ³	●	-	-	●	●
Subjective Memory	●	-	-	●	●
Addenbrooks Cognitive Examination-R ⁴	●	-	-	-	-

Results

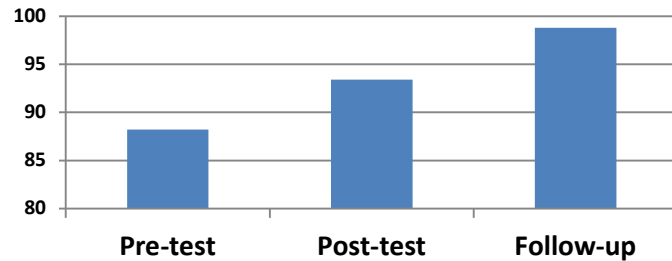
Memory goal attainment score:



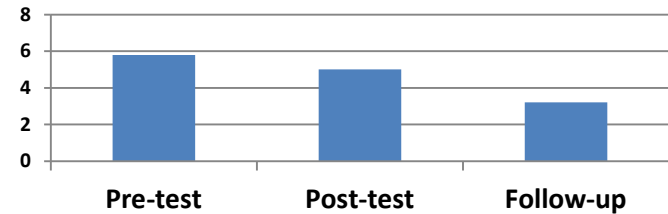
Memory control beliefs:



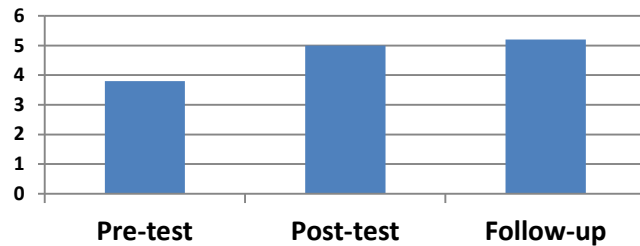
Memory strategy use:



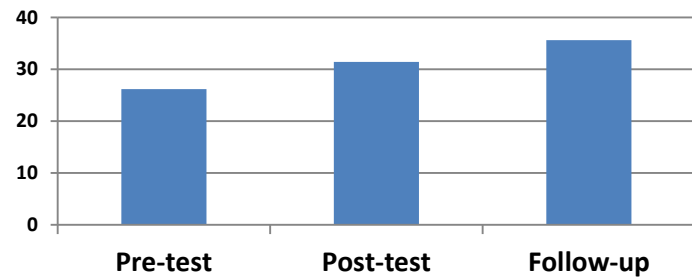
Worries about future memory performance:



Subjective memory performance:

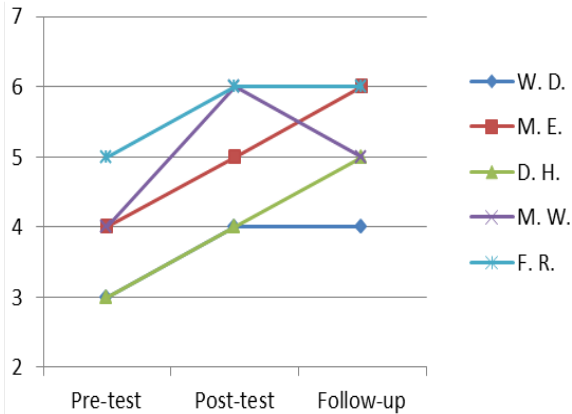


Objective memory performance:

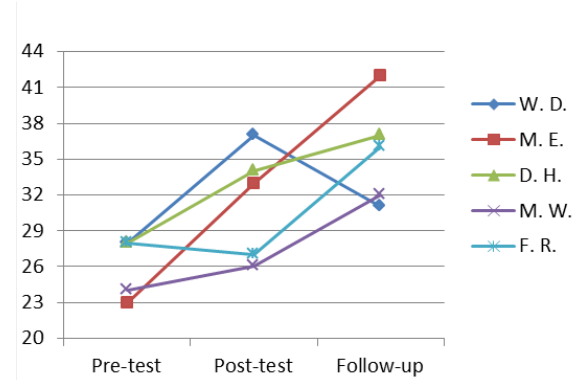


Results

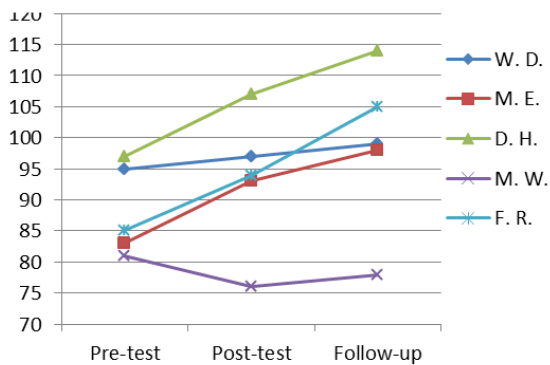
Subjective memory performance



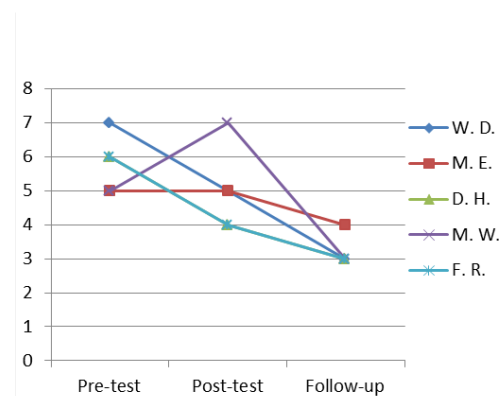
Objective memory performance



Memory strategy usage



Worries about future memory performance



gunnar.scheibner@gmail.com

J.M.Leathem@massey.ac.nz

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Scheibner, G
