



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Comforting Language, Identity, and Well-Being in Elderly Care in Chinese Nursing Homes

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Jun 29, 2024 Accepted: Sep 11, 2024	Nursing homes in China have been proliferating, yet the standard of care, particularly in terms of emotional and psychological support, often fails to meet the needs of the elderly. This study investigates the role of comforting language in enhancing the well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents in Chinese nursing homes. Utilizing narrative research methods, this study observed and interviewed residents in 10 top-tier and 10 standard nursing homes across China. The focus was on understanding the elderly's perception of comforting language and its impact on their sense of belonging and happiness within these facilities. Through case analysis, we found that comforting language plays a crucial role in the mental and emotional well-being of the elderly. In top-tier nursing homes, where staff frequently employed empathetic and affirming language, residents exhibited higher levels of contentment and a stronger sense of belonging. Conversely, in ordinary nursing homes, where comforting language was less prevalent, feelings of isolation and disconnection were more common. Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of training for nursing home staff in the use of comforting language. The ability to communicate effectively and empathetically was seen as a key factor in promoting a positive environment for the elderly. This training goes beyond mere words, encompassing non-verbal cues and the creation of a holistic environment of care and respect. The implications of this study are significant for the future of elderly care in China. By prioritizing comforting language and empathetic communication, nursing homes can greatly enhance the quality of life for their residents. This approach not only benefits the elderly in terms of their mental and emotional health but also contributes to a more positive and nurturing care environment overall.
Keywords Elderly Care Comforting Language Nursing Homes Psychological Well-Being Emotional Support	
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1. INTRODUCTION

China is undergoing a significant transformation, with an increasing proportion of the population entering their elderly years (Li et al., 2024). This shift has led to a proliferation of nursing homes aimed at providing care for the aging population. However, the standard of care in these facilities, particularly concerning emotional and psychological support, often falls short of meeting the complex needs of the elderly (Xie & Yuan, 2022).

Comforting language emerges as a critical factor in enhancing the well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents (Zhang et al., 2022). Comforting language, also referred to as soothing or empathetic language, encompasses verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that convey empathy, reassurance, and understanding (Barker et al., 2023). This form of communication is not

merely about the words spoken but also involves tone, body language, and the creation of a supportive and respectful environment. Comforting language plays a pivotal role in addressing the emotional and psychological needs of the elderly, who may experience feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and depression due to various factors such as physical decline, loss of independence, and separation from family and familiar environments (Polacsek & Woolford, 2022).

Comforting language for the older adults care significantly alleviate symptoms of mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, which are prevalent among nursing home residents (P. Chen et al., 2023). Empathetic communication can reduce stress, promote positive emotions, and enhance coping mechanisms. By feeling heard and understood, older adults are more likely to engage in social interactions and participate in communal activities, which are essential for maintaining mental health and preventing social isolation.

Using comforting language in medical settings can improve the overall medical experience for the elderly (Omori et al., 2022). Effective communication between caregivers and residents fosters trust and cooperation, which can lead to better adherence to medical treatments and a more positive perception of the care received. Older adults care emphasizes the importance of addressing emotional needs alongside physical health, thereby promoting a more comprehensive model of well-being.

Hence, it is imperative to research the role of comforting language in elderly care within Chinese nursing homes. This study aims to fill the gap in current research by providing empirical evidence on the impact of empathetic communication on the well-being of elderly residents. By highlighting the importance of training nursing home staff in the use of comforting language, this research seeks to advocate for policy changes and the implementation of best practices in elderly care. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance the quality of life for older adults and create a more supportive and nurturing environment in nursing homes across China.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

China's aging population trend presents unique challenges for elderly care (Lei et al., 2021). Traditionally, elderly care in China has been deeply rooted in Confucian values that emphasize filial piety, where family members are expected to care for their elderly relatives (He et al., 2023). However, urbanization, smaller family sizes, and increased life expectancy have led to a growing reliance on institutional care (Qiu et al., 2022). Wang and Tang (2023) indicate that the traditional family-based care model is increasingly being supplemented by professional elderly care facilities, leading to a significant transformation in the landscape of elderly care.

The proliferation of nursing homes in China has not uniformly translated into improved care standards (Yan, 2022). Orr et al. (2023) highlights significant disparities in the quality of care provided by different nursing homes. Top-tier facilities often boast better resources, training, and services, whereas many standard nursing homes struggle with inadequate staffing, insufficient training, and a lack of focus on the emotional and psychological needs of the older adults. The challenge lies in bridging this gap and ensuring that all nursing homes can provide comprehensive care that addresses both physical and emotional well-being.

Comforting language refers to verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that convey empathy, reassurance, and emotional support (Reifarth et al., 2024). It is essential in providing emotional comfort and fostering a sense of security and belonging.

MacIntyre et al. (2022) suggest comforting language is a critical component of emotional coping, helping individuals manage stress and emotional distress. Gonella et al. (2021) found that older adults who were regularly engaged with comforting language from caregivers reported higher levels of happiness and a stronger sense of identity. Comforting language helps create an environment

where residents feel valued and understood, which is crucial for their emotional well-being and self-esteem (Altinay et al., 2023). These findings are consistent with the notion that empathetic communication can significantly enhance the quality of life for elderly residents.

Psychological and emotional support are crucial aspects of elderly care, particularly in nursing homes, where residents often face challenges such as health decline, loss of independence, and social isolation (Lapane et al., 2022). Corcoran and O'Flaherty (2022) highlighted that psychological well-being includes aspects such as self-acceptance, positive relationships, and a sense of purpose, all of which are significantly influenced by the emotional climate of the care environment.

In practice, the provision of psychological and emotional support varies widely across nursing homes. While top-tier nursing homes often implement robust training programs for staff to provide emotional support, standard nursing homes frequently lack such initiatives, resulting in a higher prevalence of psychological distress among residents. This disparity underscores the need for systemic changes to ensure that all nursing home staff are trained to provide empathetic and effective emotional support (Chang & Do, 2024).

The quality of care in nursing homes varies significantly across different levels of institutions. Top-tier nursing homes typically have better infrastructure, more qualified staff, and comprehensive care programs that include emotional and psychological support. Hung et al. (2022) indicates that these facilities are often able to implement best practices in elderly care, including regular training for staff in comforting language and emotional support.

In contrast, standard nursing homes often struggle with limited resources, leading to gaps in the quality of care. Lee et al. (2022) found that in lower-tier nursing homes, the lack of training and high staff turnover rates contribute to a care environment where emotional support is minimal. Residents in these facilities are more likely to experience feelings of isolation and disconnection. Liu et al. (2023) supports this finding, noting that residents in top-tier nursing homes reported higher levels of contentment and a stronger sense of belonging compared to those in standard nursing homes.

Yan and Luo (2023) highlight critical insights into the current situation and challenges of elderly care in China, the significance of comforting language, and the importance of psychological and emotional support in nursing homes. There is a clear need for enhancing the standards of emotional and psychological care across all levels of nursing homes. Comforting language emerges as a vital tool for improving the well-being and sense of identity among older adults. While top-tier nursing homes demonstrate the positive impact of such practices, standard nursing homes lag, highlighting the necessity for policy changes and the implementation of training programs across all levels of elderly care facilities (Focacci & Perez, 2022). By prioritizing comforting language and empathetic communication, nursing homes can significantly enhance the quality of life for their residents, promoting a more nurturing and supportive care environment (Melekis et al., 2021).

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative narrative research design to explore the role of comforting language in enhancing the well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents in Chinese nursing homes. This design was chosen for its effectiveness in capturing personal stories and subjective experiences, which are essential in understanding the emotional and psychological impacts of communication practices in caregiving (Camic et al., 2023).

3.2 Sample Selection

The research was conducted in 20 nursing homes across China, divided into two categories: 10 top-tier nursing homes and 10 standard nursing homes. These categories were defined based on factors

such as resource availability, staff training levels, and overall care quality. The selection aimed to provide a comprehensive comparison between facilities with different standards of care. The sample included both residents and staff members, ensuring diverse perspectives on the use and impact of comforting language.

Table 1. Ranking of Top Ten Elderly Care Centers in China

Ranking	Elderly Care Centers	Index
1	Taikang Home	10
2	Guangda Huichen Elderly Care	9.8
3	Jiuru City	9.6
4	Great Love for the World	9.4
5	Affinity source	9.2
6	Chunxuan Mao	9
7	General elderly care	8.8
8	Sincerity and respect	8.6
9	Lecheng Elderly Care	8.4
10	Parenting	8.2

Table 2. 10 standard sanatoriums in China

Ranking	Elderly Care Centers
1	Beijing Dongcheng District Rehabilitation and Elderly Care Home
2	Shanghai Baoshan District Rehabilitation and Sanatorium
3	Tianhe District Community Rehabilitation Center, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province
4	A county-level sanatorium in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province
5	Rehabilitation Center of a Township in Hefei City, Anhui Province
6	A community rehabilitation service station in Chengdu, Sichuan
7	Wuhan Hongshan District Elderly Rehabilitation and Sanatorium in Hubei Province
8	Rehabilitation and Elderly Care Home in Tiexi District, Shenyang City, Liaoning Province
9	Rehabilitation and Sanatorium in a County, Jinan City, Shandong Province
10	Jiangsu Nanjing Jiangning District Community Rehabilitation Center

In China, sanatoriums (also known as rehabilitation homes or rest homes) are usually used to provide rehabilitation, healing, and recuperation services. Lower-level sanatoriums generally have basic

rehabilitation facilities and nursing services, but they are not as good as higher-level sanatoriums in terms of resources, professional equipment, and personnel allocation.

3.3 Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews conducted in this study were designed to comprehensively capture the experiences and perspectives of both residents and staff members. The interviews began with an introduction and obtaining consent from participants, explaining the purpose of the interview.

For older adults, the interviews focused on three main areas: their overall feelings of well-being, their sense of identity, and their perception of staff communication. Residents were asked about their happiness and contentment, how often they felt valued and understood by the staff, their feelings of belonging within the nursing home, and how staff communication impacted their sense of identity. They provided specific examples of comforting language and its effects on them. For staff members, the interviews explored their training experiences and attitudes toward comforting language. Staff were questioned about the nature and extent of their training in empathetic communication, their preparedness to use comforting language, their personal views on its importance in caregiving, and the challenges they faced in implementing such communication. These comprehensive interviews aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the role of comforting language in enhancing the well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents in Chinese nursing homes.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study employed a rigorous thematic analysis approach to identify, examine, and report recurring patterns within the collected data. The process included several critical steps to ensure the reliability and depth of the findings.

Initially, all interview and observation data were transcribed verbatim, creating a comprehensive textual dataset. This dataset was meticulously reviewed to ensure accuracy and completeness. Following this, the data underwent systematic coding, which involved tagging segments of the text with labels that identified relevant information related to the research questions. This iterative process required multiple rounds of coding to refine and categorize the data accurately. The coded data were then organized into several key themes. These broader patterns captured significant aspects of the data about the research objectives. One emergent theme was the impact of comforting language on residents' well-being. Analysis revealed that both verbal and non-verbal comforting language positively influenced residents' feelings of happiness, security, and identity. Residents frequently exposed to comforting language reported higher levels of emotional well-being and a stronger sense of belonging.

Another key theme involved the comparative differences in communication practices between top-tier and standard nursing homes. The data indicated significant disparities in the use and effectiveness of comforting language. Top-tier facilities demonstrated more consistent and effective use of comforting communication, correlating with better resident outcomes.

The role of staff training and attitudes towards comforting communication emerged as a crucial theme. The analysis showed that staff who received comprehensive training in empathetic communication felt more confident and adept at using comforting language. These staff members also expressed a greater appreciation for the importance of comforting language in caregiving. Conversely, staff in facilities with less emphasis on training often felt unprepared and faced challenges in implementing effective comforting communication.

This thematic analysis concluded that comforting language plays a crucial role in enhancing the emotional well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents. The findings underscore the necessity for standardized training programs across all nursing homes to equip staff with the skills required for providing high-quality emotional support. Additionally, the analysis highlighted the

need for systemic improvements to reduce disparities between different levels of nursing homes, promoting equitable care for all residents.

The study uses qualitative data collection methods, including extensive observations, semi-structured interviews, and surveys. Observations were conducted to capture the real-time interactions between staff and residents, focusing on instances of comforting language. These observations provided contextual insights into the daily communication practices within nursing homes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both residents and staff members to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding the use of comforting language. Residents were asked about their emotional well-being, sense of identity, and how they perceived staff communication. Staff members were queried about their training experiences, attitudes toward comforting language, and the challenges they faced in implementing empathetic communication. Additionally, surveys were administered to collect demographic information and to quantify the prevalence and impact of comforting language on resident well-being. The data were then transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and themes. This rigorous methodological approach ensured a robust and comprehensive understanding of the role of comforting language in nursing home settings.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Impact on Residents' Well-being

The results indicate that the regular use of comforting language substantially enhances the emotional well-being of elderly residents in nursing homes. Observations and interviews revealed that residents frequently exposed to comforting language reported higher levels of happiness, a sense of security, and a stronger sense of belonging. In top-tier nursing homes, where staff are extensively trained in empathetic communication, residents consistently felt valued and understood, which significantly boosted their self-esteem and overall emotional health. Residents in these homes described how the compassionate and understanding demeanor of the staff made them feel more at home and less isolated.

Conversely, residents in standard nursing homes, which often lack adequate training and resources, exhibited higher levels of psychological distress and feelings of isolation. This contrast underscores the vital role of comforting language in promoting emotional well-being among elderly residents (Park et al., 2023).

The data from interviews supported these findings, with numerous residents in standard homes expressing feelings of neglect and disconnection due to the impersonal nature of interactions with staff. These findings highlight the importance of implementing comforting language as a core component of care practices in nursing homes to enhance resident well-being.

4.2 Comparative Analysis of Nursing Homes

A comparative analysis between top-tier and standard nursing homes revealed stark differences in the quality of care and emotional support provided. Top-tier facilities, characterized by better infrastructure and comprehensive care programs, effectively utilized comforting language, resulting in improved resident outcomes (J. Chen et al., 2023). These homes demonstrated a consistent application of comforting communication, leading to higher resident satisfaction and a stronger sense of community.

Older adults in top-tier nursing homes reported more positive interactions with staff, describing them as attentive, empathetic, and responsive to their emotional needs. In contrast, standard nursing homes faced significant challenges due to limited resources and insufficient staff training. These

homes often struggled to provide the same level of emotional support, leading to gaps in the quality of care.

Older adults in standard nursing homes frequently reported feeling overlooked and undervalued, which contributed to higher instances of dissatisfaction and a greater sense of disconnection and neglect. Observational data highlighted the discrepancy in staff behavior and interaction quality between the two types of facilities, with top-tier homes exhibiting more frequent and meaningful use of comforting language. The comparative analysis underscores the impact of resource availability and training on the effectiveness of comforting language in nursing homes, suggesting that improvements in these areas could bridge the gap in care quality between different types of facilities.

4.3 Role of Staff Training

The study highlights the critical importance of staff training in the effective use of comforting language. Interviews with staff members indicated that those in top-tier nursing homes, who received regular training in empathetic communication, felt more confident and better equipped to meet the emotional needs of residents. This training positively influenced their attitudes towards providing emotional support, enhancing their ability to use comforting language effectively. Staff in these facilities reported feeling more prepared to handle the emotional and psychological challenges that residents face, leading to more consistent and effective use of comforting language.

Conversely, staff in standard nursing homes, who lacked such training, often felt unprepared and less confident in their ability to provide emotional support, leading to less effective communication and higher levels of distress among residents. The disparity in training and preparedness underscores the need for systemic changes to ensure that all nursing home staff are adequately trained in empathetic communication.

Observational data supported these findings, showing that staff in top-tier homes used comforting language more frequently and effectively than those in standard homes. Thematic analysis of interview data further revealed that staff training was a significant determinant of the quality of emotional support provided to residents. These findings advocate for the implementation of comprehensive training programs across all nursing homes to enhance the emotional well-being of residents.

4.4 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis of the data identified several key themes related to emotional comfort and security, coping and stress management, and training and implementation.

Comforting language was found to provide significant emotional comfort, fostering a sense of security and belonging among residents. This was particularly evident in top-tier nursing homes where empathetic communication is a routine part of care. Older adults who experienced consistent comforting language reported better-coping mechanisms and lower levels of stress, highlighting the critical role of emotional support in maintaining psychological well-being. The analysis also pointed to the effectiveness of comforting language being closely tied to the training and attitudes of staff (Yang et al., 2023). Nursing homes that invested in regular training saw more positive outcomes in resident well-being and staff confidence. On the other hand, significant disparities in resources between top-tier and standard nursing homes were evident, directly impacting the quality of emotional support provided. This often led to higher instances of resident isolation and dissatisfaction in standard nursing homes. The findings emphasize the importance of systemic improvements and the implementation of standardized training programs to ensure that all nursing home staff are equipped with the skills necessary to provide effective emotional support. This comprehensive thematic analysis underscores the multifaceted benefits of comforting language and the need for consistent and equitable care practices across all nursing homes.

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the critical importance of comforting language in enhancing the well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents in nursing homes. The results advocate for the implementation of comprehensive training programs for nursing home staff and policy changes to ensure consistent emotional support across all facilities. Addressing these disparities and enhancing training will contribute to better care environments, ultimately improving the quality of life for elderly residents in nursing homes.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The findings from the study on comforting language in Chinese nursing homes provide profound insights into its impact on the emotional well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents. Comforting language, defined as empathetic, supportive, and reassuring communication, plays a crucial role in enhancing residents' quality of life (Byrne et al., 2024). The qualitative narrative approach allowed for a deep exploration of personal stories and subjective experiences, capturing nuanced effects. Consistent use of comforting language by staff significantly improved residents' emotional well-being, leading to higher levels of happiness, security, and a stronger sense of identity. Top-tier nursing homes, with comprehensive staff training in empathetic communication, demonstrated particularly positive outcomes, including a marked sense of belonging and emotional stability (Bradley et al., 2024).

Both verbal and non-verbal comforting language, including gestures like holding hands and maintaining eye contact, were effective in making residents feel valued and understood. The disparity in comforting language use and effectiveness between top-tier and standard nursing homes underscored the need for systemic improvements in communication practices.

Staff training emerged as a critical factor, with extensively trained personnel feeling more confident and adept at using comforting language, while those in facilities with less training faced challenges in implementation (Smythe et al., 2024). Prioritizing comforting language and empathetic communication can create a more supportive and nurturing environment, ultimately enhancing elderly residents' quality of life.

The research findings align with and extend the existing literature on empathetic communication in elderly care. Previous studies have consistently emphasized the importance of emotional support in improving the well-being of elderly residents in nursing homes. For instance, Hendriks and Birnberg (2023) found that residents exposed to comforting language reported higher levels of happiness and a stronger sense of identity.

This study corroborates those findings and provides additional insights by comparing the practices and outcomes between top-tier and standard nursing homes. Sokos et al. (2023) also highlighted the critical role of emotional support in Older adults care. Yong et al. (2023) focused on the emotional climate of nursing homes, demonstrating that a supportive environment significantly influences residents' psychological well-being. Xu et al. (2023) identified that comprehensive training programs in top-tier nursing homes are associated with reduced psychological distress among residents.

This study supports and extends these findings by emphasizing the disparity in communication practices between different tiers of nursing homes and the need for systemic improvements. The current research contributes new knowledge by providing a detailed comparative analysis of top-tier and standard nursing homes (Song et al., 2024). It highlights the stark differences in the use of comforting language and the resulting impact on resident well-being. The study also identifies specific factors, such as staff training and resource allocation, that contribute to these disparities. By doing so, it offers a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which comforting language influences resident outcomes. Furthermore, this study adds depth to the existing literature

by capturing the personal stories and subjective experiences of residents. This approach allows for a richer exploration of the emotional and psychological impacts of comforting language, providing valuable insights into the lived experiences of elderly residents in nursing homes.

Overall, this research advances the field by bridging gaps in the existing literature and offering new perspectives on the importance of comforting language in elderly care. It underscores the need for systemic improvements in training and resource allocation to ensure equitable care across all levels of nursing homes.

5.2 Practical Implications

The practical implications of these findings are substantial and have the potential to significantly improve the quality of care in nursing homes. First and foremost, the study suggests that nursing home administrators should prioritize the implementation of comprehensive training programs for their staff. These programs should focus on developing empathetic communication skills, emphasizing the importance of comforting language in enhancing residents' emotional well-being and sense of identity. By providing staff with the necessary training and resources, nursing homes can create a more supportive and nurturing care environment.

This, in turn, can lead to better resident outcomes, including higher levels of happiness, security, and emotional stability. The study's findings highlight the critical role of staff training in the effective use of comforting language and suggest that such training should be standardized across all nursing homes to ensure consistent and high-quality emotional support. In addition to staff training, the study recommends policy changes to standardize emotional support training across all nursing homes. Policymakers should consider implementing regulations that require nursing homes to provide comprehensive training programs for their staff, ensuring that even standard facilities can offer high-quality emotional care. Such policy changes could help bridge the gap between different levels of nursing homes and promote equitable care for all residents. Furthermore, the study suggests that nursing home administrators should create a culture that values and prioritizes emotional support. This can be achieved by fostering an environment where staff feel empowered to use comforting language and empathetic communication in their daily interactions with residents. Administrators should also encourage ongoing professional development and provide opportunities for staff to enhance their communication skills. The practical implications extend to the design and implementation of interventions aimed at improving the emotional well-being of elderly residents. Nursing homes can develop specific programs and activities that incorporate comforting language and empathetic communication. For example, staff can be trained to use comforting language during routine interactions, such as during meals, recreational activities, and personal care. These interventions can help create a more supportive and nurturing environment, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its significant contributions, the study acknowledges several limitations. One major limitation is the qualitative nature of the research, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The study's findings are based on the experiences of residents in a specific cultural context, focusing on Chinese nursing homes. Therefore, the results may not be directly applicable to nursing homes in different cultural settings. Future research should consider incorporating diverse cultural contexts to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Another limitation is the potential for bias in self-reported data. The study relied on interviews with residents and staff, which may have introduced social desirability bias. Participants may have provided responses they believed were expected or desirable, rather than their true experiences. Future research could use mixed-method approaches to mitigate this limitation, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative measures to validate and extend the findings. The study also primarily examined the immediate effects of comforting

language, necessitating longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact over time. The long-term effects of comforting language on resident well-being and the potential for sustained benefits or challenges remain unclear. Future research should explore these long-term effects through longitudinal studies, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of comforting language. Additionally, the study's focus on the impact of staff training highlights the need for intervention studies to test specific training programs. Future research should develop and test interventions to improve staff communication skills and evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing resident outcomes. Such studies can provide valuable insights into the most effective approaches for implementing comforting language practices in nursing homes.

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several future research directions are proposed. First, future research should incorporate larger sample sizes and mixed-method approaches to validate and extend the findings. Combining qualitative interviews with quantitative measures can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of comforting language on resident well-being. Longitudinal studies are needed to investigate the long-term effects of comforting language on resident well-being. These studies can help identify sustained benefits or challenges and provide insights into the mechanisms through which comforting language influences resident outcomes over time. By exploring the long-term effects, researchers can develop more effective interventions and strategies for improving emotional support in nursing homes. Intervention studies should be developed to test specific training programs for staff across different levels of nursing homes. These studies can evaluate the effectiveness of various training approaches and identify best practices for implementing comforting language practices. By testing and refining training programs, researchers can provide evidence-based recommendations for improving staff communication skills and enhancing resident outcomes. Additionally, future research should explore the integration of digital tools and communication technologies in elderly care. Digital tools, such as virtual reality and telecommunication platforms, can support the implementation and consistency of comforting language practices. These technologies can provide staff with additional resources and training opportunities, enhancing their ability to provide high-quality emotional support.

In conclusion, this study significantly contributes to understanding the role of comforting language in enhancing the well-being and sense of identity among elderly residents in Chinese nursing homes. The findings highlight the critical importance of staff training in empathetic communication and underscore the need for systemic improvements in training and resource allocation across all levels of nursing homes to promote equitable care and improve resident outcomes.

Appendix1 Outline of the effect of comfort language on older people (English version)

Part 1 Introduction	Purpose of the Interview	Explain the objective of the interview, this interview outline is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of comforting language on residents' well-being and sense of identity, as well as the training experiences and attitudes of staff members towards empathetic communication, emphasizing the focus on understanding the impact of comforting language on residents' well-being and identity.
	Confidentiality Assurance	Assure participants that their responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.
	Consent	Obtain informed consent from participants.

Part 2 Resident Interviews	Section 1 Over All Feelings of Well- Being	<p>1. Happiness and Contentment</p> <p>(1) Can you describe your overall feelings of happiness and contentment since staying in this nursing home?</p> <p>(2) How do you think the communication from the staff affects your daily mood?</p> <p>2. Feeling Valued and Understood</p> <p>(1) What actions of employees make you feel valued?</p> <p>(2) Can you provide some examples that employees understand you?</p>
	Section 2 Sense of Identity	<p>1. Sense of Belonging</p> <p>(1) Do you feel a sense of belonging within this nursing home? Why or why not?</p> <p>(2) How has the communication with the staff influenced your feelings of belonging?</p> <p>2. Impact on Identity</p> <p>(1) How does the way staff communicate with you impact your sense of identity?</p> <p>(2) Can you share a specific instance where a staff member's words or actions made you feel more connected to who you are?</p>
	Section 3 Perception of Staff Communication	<p>1. Examples of Comforting Language</p> <p>(1) Can you recall specific instances of comforting language used by the staff?</p> <p>(2) How did these instances make you feel?</p> <p>2. Overall Communication</p> <p>(1) How would you rate the overall communication style of the staff in terms of empathy and support?</p> <p>(2) What improvements, if any, would you suggest for staff communication?</p>
	Section 1 Training Experiences	<p>1. Nature and Extent of Training</p> <p>(1) Can you describe the training you have received in empathetic communication?</p> <p>(2) How comprehensive do you feel this training was?</p> <p>2. Preparedness</p> <p>(1) Do you feel adequately prepared to use comforting language in your daily interactions with residents?</p> <p>(2) What aspects of the training were most helpful, and which areas do you think need improvement?</p>

Part 3 Staff Interviews	Section 2 Attitudes Toward Comforting Language	<p>1. Importance in Caregiving</p> <p>(1) In your view, how important is the use of comforting language in caregiving?</p> <p>(2) Can you provide examples of how comforting language has positively impacted residents?</p> <p>2. Personal Views</p> <p>(1) How do you personally feel about using comforting language as part of your job?</p> <p>(2) What motivates you to use comforting language, and what challenges do you face?</p>
	Section 3 Implementation Challenges	<p>1. Challenges Faced</p> <p>(1) What challenges have you encountered in implementing comforting language consistently?</p> <p>(2) How do you overcome these challenges?</p> <p>2. Support and Resources</p> <p>(1) What kind of support or resources would help you in better implementing comforting language?</p> <p>(2) Are there any specific tools or training that you think would be beneficial?</p>

Chinese version

第一部分 引言	访谈目的	本访谈提纲旨在全面了解安慰性语言对居民幸福感和认同感的影响，以及工作人员对移情沟通的培训经历和态度，强调重点是了解安慰性言语对居民幸福和认同感影响。
	保密保证	向参与者保证，他们的回复将保密，仅用于研究目的。
	同意	获得参与者的知情同意。
第二部分 住户访谈	第一节 总体幸福感	<p>1.幸福与满足</p> <p>(1) 您能描述一下您入住养老院后的幸福感和满足感吗？</p> <p>(2) 您认为员工的沟通会如何影响您的日常情绪？</p> <p>2.感觉被重视和理解</p> <p>(1) 员工的哪些行为让您觉得自己受到了重视？</p> <p>(2) 您能提供一些例子，说明员工是真正理解您吗？</p>
	第二节 认同感	<p>1.归属感</p> <p>(1) 您在这个疗养院有归属感吗？为什么？</p> <p>(2) 与员工的沟通是如何影响您的归属感的？</p> <p>2.对身份的影响</p> <p>(1) 员工与您沟通的方式如何影响您的认同感？</p>

		(2) 您能分享一个具体的例子吗? 在这个例子中, 一名工作人员的言行让您感觉与自己的联系更加紧密?
	第三节 员工沟通感知	1.安慰语言的例子 (1) 您能回忆起员工使用安慰性语言的具体例子吗? (2) 这些例子让您有什么感受? 2.整体沟通 (1) 您如何评价员工在同理心和支持方面的整体沟通风格? (2) 如果有的话, 您会对员工沟通提出哪些改进建议?
第三部分 员工访谈	第一节 培训经验	1.培训的性质和范围 (1) 您能描述一下您在移情沟通方面所接受的培训吗? (2) 您觉得这次训练有多全面? 2.准备 (1) 在与居民的日常互动中, 您是否做好了使用安慰性语言的充分准备? (2) 培训的哪些方面最有帮助, 您认为哪些方面需要改进?
	第二节 对舒适语言的态度	1.照顾的重要性 (1) 在您看来, 在护理中使用安慰性语言有多重要? (2) 您能举例说明安慰性语言对居民的积极影响吗? 2.个人观点 (1) 您个人对在工作中使用安慰性语言有何感受? (2) 是什么促使您使用安慰性语言, 您面临哪些挑战?
	第三节 实施方面的挑战	1.面临的挑战 (1) 在始终如一地实现令人欣慰的语言方面, 您遇到了哪些挑战? (2) 您是如何克服这些挑战的? 2.支持和资源 (1) 什么样的支持或资源可以帮助您更好地使用安慰性语言? (2) 是否有您认为有益的具体工具或培训?

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