

“Partnering with Poise”: Retention of cognitive, emotional, and physical benefits for care partners of people living with Parkinson's disease at 6 and 12 months after completion of an in-person Alexander-based group course



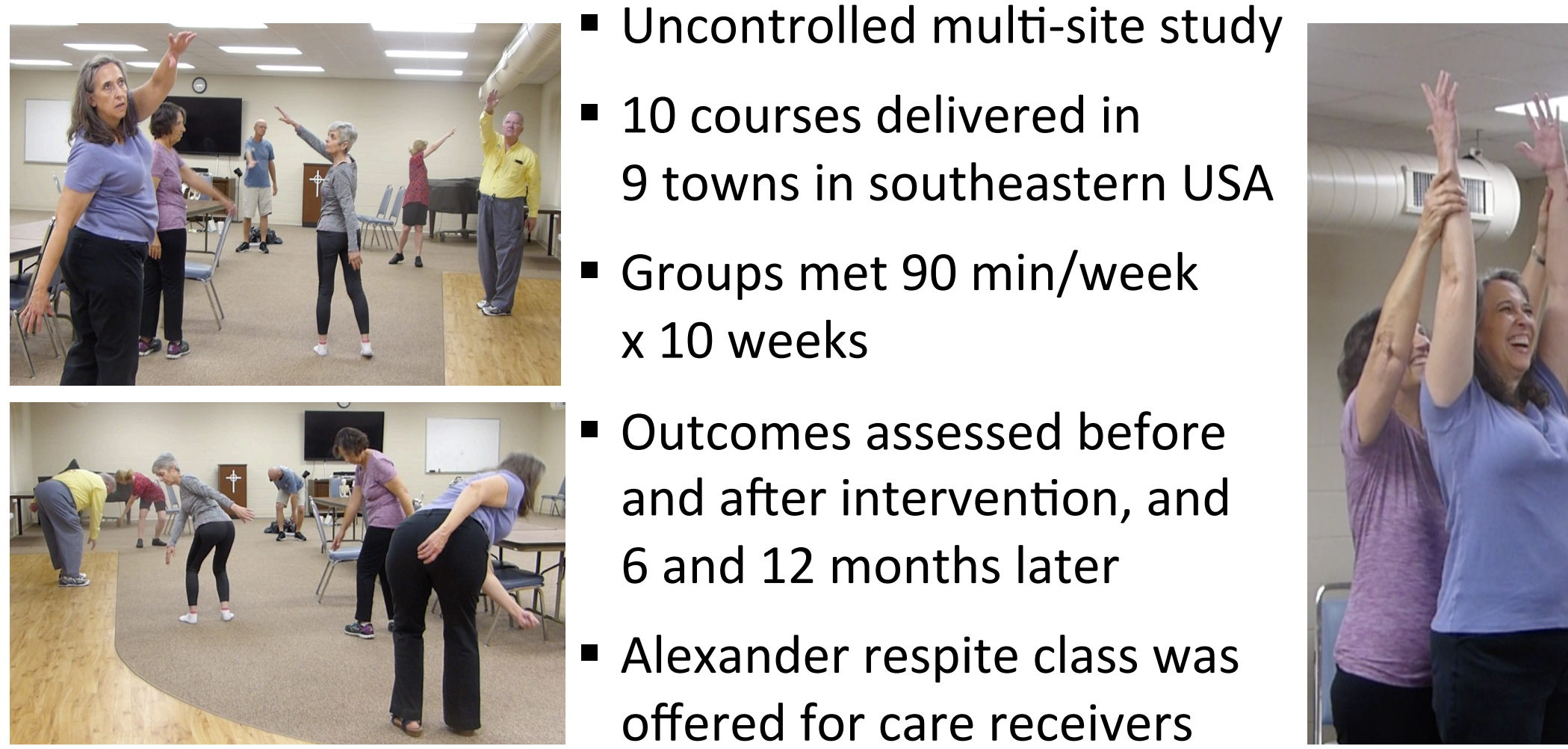
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Background & Purpose

- Informal care partners, such as spouses, children, neighbors, and other close connections, are an essential, yet often “invisible”, part of the Parkinson’s community.
- Care partners may experience high stress situations, loss-of-self, and physical injury in their role.
- Alexander technique (AT) training has demonstrated physical benefits, such as improved coordination and pain reduction; studies also show secondary benefits, such as reduced anxiety, increased self-confidence, and a greater sense of agency.
- Our purpose** was to determine whether Alexander-based group courses benefit informal care partners and whether there is long-term retention of benefits.

Design



- Uncontrolled multi-site study
- 10 courses delivered in 9 towns in southeastern USA
- Groups met 90 min/week x 10 weeks
- Outcomes assessed before and after intervention, and 6 and 12 months later
- Alexander respite class was offered for care receivers

Intervention

Courses were designed to:

- Counter care partner isolation
- Allow peer-to-peer learning in a group setting
- Build embodied self-awareness
- Remove economic barriers
- Teach effective use of calm voice and touch to prompt care receivers
- Practice choice-making activities to enhance resilience and agency



Participants



- 72 began the course; 62 completed; 47 were assessed at 6 months and 35 at 12 months
- Most participants were white, female, college graduates, married to their care recipient
- Mean age at pretest was 68 years

Measures

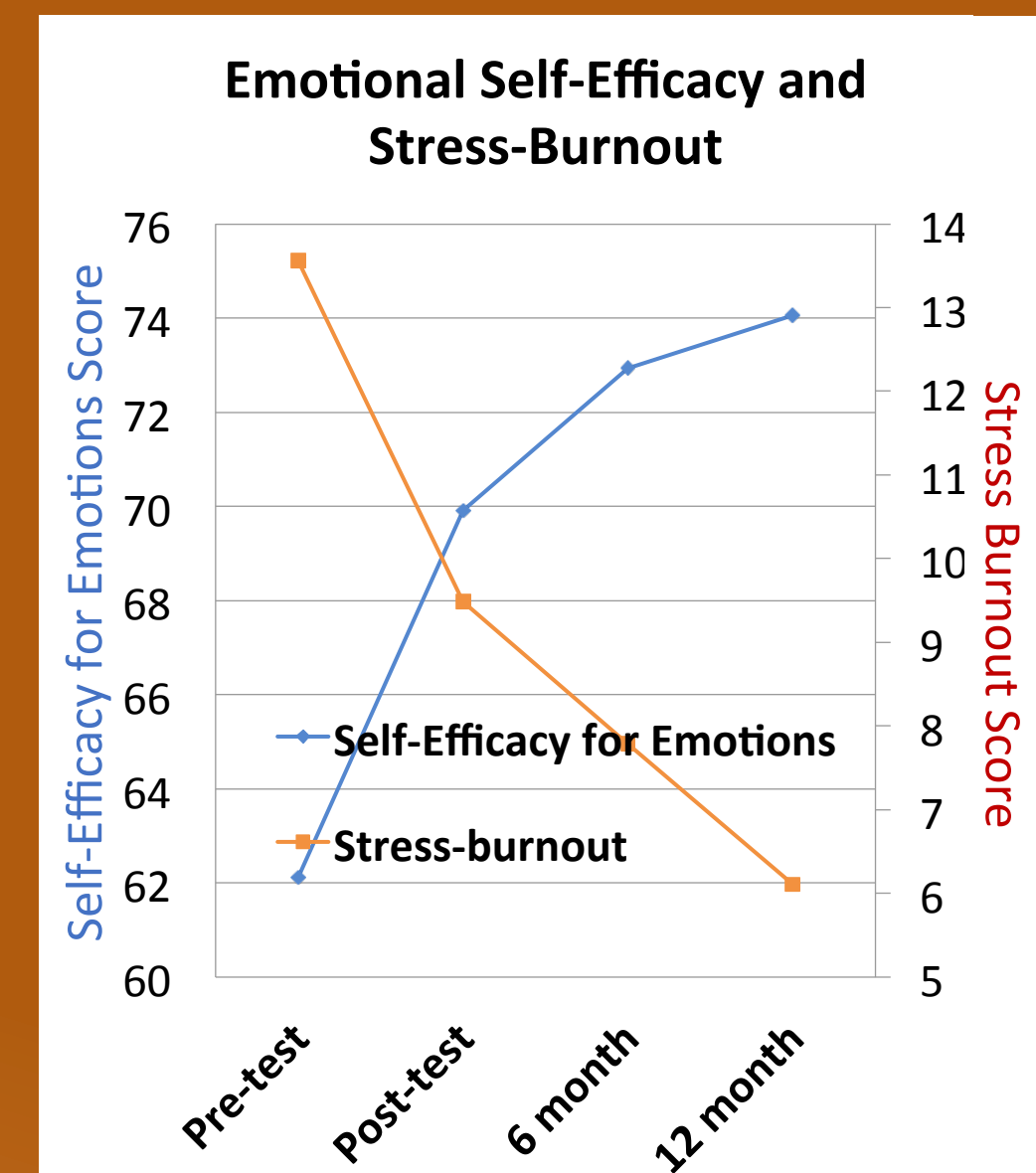
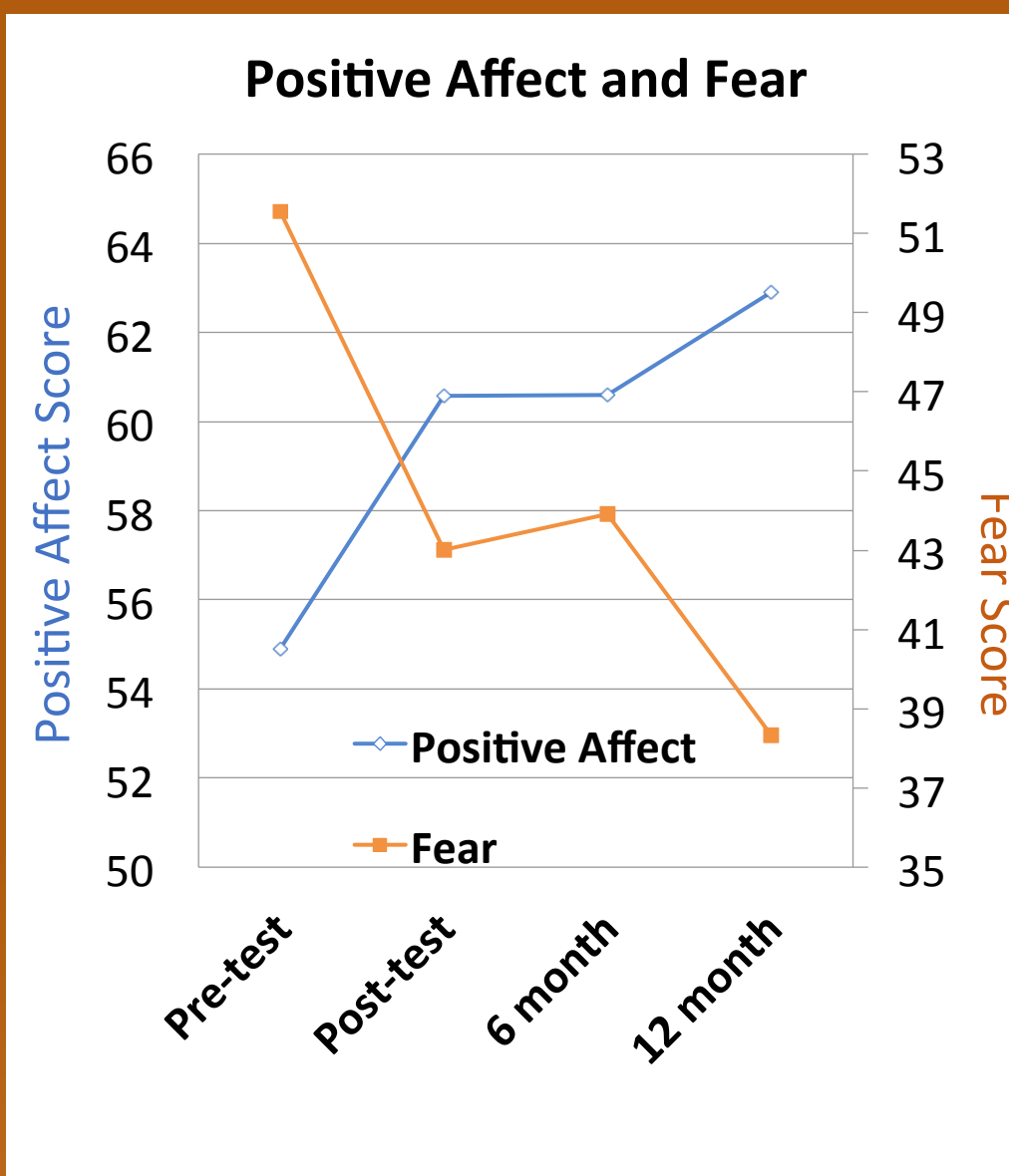
- Executive function: Stroop, Digit Span
- Balance assessment: MiniBESTest
- Self-report: NIH PROMIS & Toolbox



Results

- In the table below, empty blue cells indicate no significant difference; green with two stars indicates $p < .05$; yellow with three stars indicates $p < .001$

Measure	Pre vs Post	Pre vs 6mo	Pre vs 12mo
Digit Span – Forward			
Digit Span – Backward	***		
Stroop – Conflict	**	***	**
MiniBESTest (Balance)	***	***	***
Stress-Burnout	**	***	***
Emotional Self-efficacy	***	***	**
Positive Affect	**	**	**
Fear	**	***	**
Mobility	***	***	***
Zarit Burden Scale			
Emotional Distress	**		**
Mindful Awareness			**
Perceived Stress			
Pain Interference			
Overall Self-efficacy			**



Conclusion



Partnering with Poise, an enjoyable replicable group course for care partners of people living with neurodegenerative disease, is a promising self-management intervention with potential long-term retention of benefits. Further study with a randomized control group is merited.

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