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An Occupational Therapy Perspective of Post Secondary Transitions for High School Students: Considering Socioeconomics and Opportunities

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An Occupational Therapy Perspective of Post Secondary Transitions for High School Students: Considering Socioeconomics and Opportunities

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BACKGROUND

In most cases, an occupational therapist's role in a post-secondary transition includes improving adolescents with disabilities' functional preparedness to transition from a special education setting, into adult-based roles. Much of this work is explained by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and only encompasses occupational therapy's role in post-secondary transitions for adolescents with a diagnosed disability (Pierce et al., 2020). Unfortunately, these resources, programs, and services are not available to adolescents who do not have a disability. This barrier of not providing similar services or programs to adolescents without a disability creates a lack of opportunity for these individuals to explore possible career paths. This barrier also creates lack of instruction on completing necessary applications and forms, decreased knowledge of resume writing, poorly developed interview skills, and overall, a minimal number of available resources about the options after high school (Voorhees, 2021).

PROBLEM

There are limited opportunities to learn about post-high school options and develop knowledge and skills to participate in the transition process from high school to a career or further education.

PURPOSE

Create a program for high school juniors and seniors who need opportunities to learn about post-secondary job and education options and to practice skills they are going to need in those settings.

Program objectives:

- Conduct a needs to determine what resources the school is lacking, along with determining the skills the students are lacking.
- Create educational modules regarding resources that will supplement the transition into adulthood with an emphasis on continuing education to present to participants (students) and provide modules to counselors/teachers/administrators that emphasize and explains how to provide support that promotes a post-secondary transition.
- Implementation of the program
- Conduct a post-survey to determine the effectiveness of the program.

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METHODS

- 34 invited
- 16 respondents to Junior Class survey
- 18 respondents to Senior survey
- 8 respondents to Staff/Admin survey

Needs Assessment: Needs assessments were created for each grade level, along with a specific survey for admin and staff, and were intended to collect information about what the junior and senior class currently know and do during the transition out of high school; This information was used to inform content development.

Topics covered:

1. Resume Writing
2. Cover Letters
3. FAFSA
4. College Essay Writing
5. Job Interview Skills
6. Money Management and Budgeting

DELIVERABLE



PROGRAM

TREATMENT TEMPLATE COMPONENTS

General Program Goals:

1. Recognize and explore the need for occupational therapy for individuals preparing for a post-secondary transition, specifically in lower SES communities.
2. Utilize the databases to assist in the continued literature search and identify the gap in literature.
3. Determine the ideal program and deliverable needed to identify, address, and implement for individuals transitioning into adulthood from a low-SES community.
4. Collaborate with professionals who have expertise in assisting with a post-secondary transition to understand and implement appropriate strategies, language use, interventions, and goals.

Theoretical Frameworks:

The Person- Environment-Occupation Model, Developed by Carolyn Baum

Activities:

1. Education modules based off of responses to needs assessments
2. Weekly quizzes based off of module content
3. Assignment/Deliverable based on module

CONCLUSIONS / FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Throughout the duration of this capstone, strategies and occupation-based activities and education aimed to address the gap in the literature and advocate for implementation of occupational therapy for adolescents going through a post-secondary transition. The school will continue to utilize the created deliverables in their graduation preparation class in following years. Further implementation of this capstone in similar communities, will assist and guide individuals from low-SES communities through their transitions, allowing them an opportunity to find their voice and advocate for themselves, along with being able to successfully transition into life after high school.

References

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