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Consideration of Language, Culture-Education and Advocacy for Latino Families Who Use Therapy Services

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BACKGROUND

Latino families of children with ASD experience additional barriers compared to other families that include language differences, lack of knowledge, and lack of access to resources (Paula et al., 2020). These barriers can also be seen in the form of intra-cultural stigma regarding ASD, causing families to feel denial, shame, or feed into myths (Zuckerman et al., 2014).

PROBLEM

Additional systemic and intra-cultural barriers exist within the health care arena for Latino families of children with ASD.

PURPOSE

To provide healthcare education and advocacy through an OT perspective for Latino families of children with ASD.

Outcome objectives:

- Conduct a needs assessment on participants
- Develop an education and advocacy project for participants.
- Implement education and advocacy by providing families additional resources.
- Conduct a post-survey with participants to determine the effectiveness of the program.

METHODS

- 14 participants invited
- 14 participants responded to needs assessment questionnaire and pre-survey
- 12 participants responded to post-survey
- **Needs Assessment:** Parent questionnaires and therapist interviews were conducted to determine participant needs
- **Pre-Survey:** Participants shared their knowledge and comfort levels regarding certain topics through a survey utilizing the Likert Scale.
- **Post-Survey:** The same survey was administered to determine program effectiveness.

Topics covered:

1. Program goals
2. General autism
3. Knowledge and importance of occupational therapy and early intervention
4. Sensory processing needs challenges;
5. Challenging behaviors
6. The autism diagnostic process;
7. Stigma myths and the facts on autism
8. Resources available in the community for families of children with ASD

PROGRAM

General Program Goals:

1. Educate parents on various ASD topics related to their child.
2. Educate parents on the stigma that surrounds ASD and how to decrease it.
3. Provide parents with various resources in the community pertaining to ASD in children.
4. Increase general ASD knowledge in parents.

Theoretical Framework:

- The Ecology of Human Performance Model

Activities:

- Provided education on topics and strategies to parents on the following topics across six sessions for six weeks:
 1. Autism spectrum disorder
 2. Occupational therapy
 3. Sensory challenges
 4. Behavioral challenges
 5. Autism diagnosis process
 6. Stigma surrounding autism
 7. Provided various resources to families

Conclusions / Future Directions

This capstone educational program aimed to reduce the barriers that Latino families of children with ASD face in the community through an occupational therapy perspective. Through this capstone project implemented for Latino families of children with ASD, we can infer that providing families with an education program consisting of various ASD topics and providing knowledge on resources available to them in the community can increase their understanding of concepts related to ASD. Moving forward, it would be beneficial to provide education and resources on more complex topics that meet the needs of the participants, as well as expand to larger audiences.

References

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