The Role of Occupational Therapy for Survivors of Human Trafficking

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The Role of Occupational Therapy for Survivors of Human Trafficking

Margaux Mariano, Becki Cohill, OTD, OTR/L, and Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

BACKGROUND

Human trafficking involves sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and trafficking of children. This modern-day form of slavery is estimated to affect 35.8 million people in the world (Gorman & Hatkevich, 2016). The needs of survivors of human trafficking are widespread due to the traumatic experiences they face. Individuals who have been subjected to human trafficking often experience occupational deprivation, indicating that they are unable to partake in personalized, meaningful occupations secondary to previously forced labor (Gorman & Hatkevich, 2016). Occupations that are often developed within the context of a natural environment and involve independent decision-making may be difficult to perform autonomously while recovering from social injustice (Gorman & Hatkevich, 2016). Occupational deprivation is evident, further entailing the global need for holistic care for these individuals.

PURPOSE

To contribute in identifying occupational therapy’s role and assessing occupational needs that survivors may have in order to develop programming.

METHODS

1. Assess impact on occupational performance through interaction in natural environment.
2. Synthesize information into development of occupation-based program.
3. Implement programming to involve participants in occupational enrichment activities.

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent living skills</td>
<td>Employment acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social engagement</td>
<td>Education participation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social participation</td>
<td>Safety maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure exploration</td>
<td>Care of children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional regulation</td>
<td>Self-care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coping skills</td>
<td>Social participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stress reduction</td>
<td>Sense of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codependence</td>
<td>Personal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal education participation</td>
<td>Behavioral health challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication management</td>
<td>Language barriers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

1. Career Exploration
2. Resume Building
3. Communication
4. Etiquette
5. Employment Seeking
6. Interview Simulations
7. Budgeting
8. Public Transportation
9. Car Management
10. Leisure Exploration
11. Leisure Participation
12. Community Mobility
13. Financial Management

CONCLUSION

As prepared for in the projected timeline, suggestions of outings for leisure were mostly denied by clients due to homework, financial restrictions, transportation restrictions, work, or other obligations. Clientele were at different stages of their recovery in relation to their personal cases. Most stated that they do not have any time for leisure activities due to work and school. Their focus was on acquiring employment and succeeding in formal education. The need of highest importance was then facilitating community integration skills for clients in preparation for transitioning. More attention was then focused on work and school occupations. Whereas, social and leisure occupations could be further explored based on best approach and timing.

REFERENCES


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