

Fall 12-9-2021

## Exploring the Role of Occupational Therapy in the Development of Behavior Management Programs for Elementary School Teachers and Staff

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### Recommended Citation

Minark, L., Cohill, B., & Park, K. (2021, December 9). Exploring the Role of Occupational Therapy in the Development of Behavior Management Programs for Elementary School Teachers and Staff. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesfall2021/15>

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# Exploring the Role of Occupational Therapy in the Development of Behavior Management Programs for Elementary School Teachers and Staff

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## BACKGROUND

When a student struggles with the ability to regulate their behavior and actions, they are more likely to exhibit behaviors that negatively impact their overall ability to participate in learning in the classroom (Ex. Eloping, task refusal, physical and verbal aggression, etc.) (Walls & Rauner, 2015). Literature shows a decrease in elementary teacher and staff's job-satisfaction, sense of confidence/competence, and overall motivation who frequently work with students who require frequent behavior management intervention and strategies. This had led to an increased rates of staff "burnout" and leaving the career field altogether (Brouwers and Tomic, 2000).

## PURPOSE

To establish OT role in staff program development and increase staff and student occupational performance with the implementation of a behavior management skills program for staff use at Park Village Elementary School.

## METHODS

### Mixed-Methods Data Approach:

- Classroom observations
- Online-Survey (N=11) (Martin et al., 1999)

### Topics covered:

1. Self-perception of confidence & abilities
2. Current & past behavior management methods and supports used in classrooms
3. Overall job-satisfaction related to behavior management
4. Most concerning student behaviors that cause barriers to occupational performance
5. School-wide behavior policy implementation
6. Staff training opportunities, training and resources still needed
7. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

## RESULTS

### Survey Numerical Data

#### Survey Participant Data

**100%** perceived that behavior management impacted job satisfaction to some capacity

**60%** felt they lacked knowledge or training on how best to handle a situation following a behavior crisis to some extent

**93%** were not fully aware of the school-wide behavior policy

**91%** agreed to some degree that behavior management was just as important as teaching academics at school

**63%** felt some degree of overall lack in confidence when managing challenging student behaviors

**100%** responded that COVID-19 had some impact on student behavior in the classroom

**100%** reported some level of interest in receiving more information, resources, or training on behavior management

A **majority** reported that "time", "understaffing", "lack of knowledge of other staff", and "lack of training upon hire" were the top barriers they perceived to implementing effective behavior management

### Survey Descriptive Data

**Population: General education and special education teachers (Grades K-5), paraprofessionals, OT, & SLP)**

#### Awareness of Available Staff Training Opportunities

#### Themes

- Lack of district training upon hire in behavior management
- Lack of required & available professional development opportunities

#### Most Concerning Behaviors Observed

#### Quotes

"Refusing to follow directions"

"Verbal aggression", "Yelling/Crying", "Screaming"

"Eloping the classroom", "Throwing furniture", "Violent behavior"

### Classroom Observations

#### Themes

Improvement needed in overall implementation and delivery of classroom rules/expectations for long-term change of behaviors

Increased strategies and interventions needed to decrease off-task/inappropriate behaviors

Need for clarified role and expectations of support staff (Paraprofessionals) and increased communication amongst team

Need for classroom adaptations and modifications vary and differ in degree depending on special education vs. general education classroom to support positive and safe environment

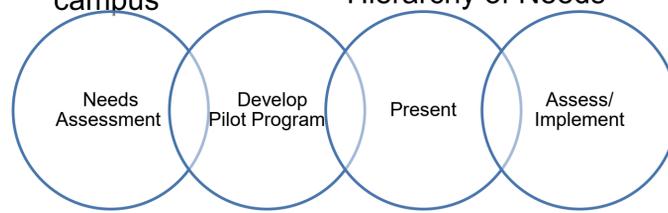
## Program Development

### Outline:

- 7 participants (N=7)
- 1 Workshop session on campus

### Pilot Program Topics:

- Discussion of school needs based on survey
- Define Behavior
- Brain Structure and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Level Categorization of Behaviors
- Interventions for each level of behavior
- Student motivation and reinforcements models
- Crisis Intervention Cycle
- Individual Student Behavior Plans and Reaction Plans
- Potential staff training areas



Acknowledgement: Special thanks to my mentor, Christine Ledgerwood, OTR/L

## OT THEORY

### Theoretical Frameworks:

1. Person-Environment Occupation Performance (PEOP) Model
2. Behavioral Frame of Reference

## OUTCOMES

### Satisfaction survey:

- Administered following the delivery of the pilot program (N=5)
- Determine the effectiveness of the pilot program and to collect feedback to plan for the development of the final program.
- 100% of participants agreed the program was useful to some extent
- 100% of respondents agreed a final program should be delivered based on the pilot program

## OT IMPLICATIONS

- Demonstrates role for OT in program development for behavior management in elementary schools to support this population
- OT's can provide education and resources within their scope: Behavior management, job-readiness, childhood diagnosis and special education, environment modifications, schedules/routines, and occupation-based interventions
- OT can support teachers and school staffs' competency when assuming the role of an advocate and consultant by providing education on student behavior management

## Dissemination

- Deliver final program to entire school population based on survey feedback
- Program Manual presentation
- Send out resources to teachers via district email

Scan for Pilot Program Manual:



flowcode.com/p/cY8n9UJK2?fc=0

Scan for References:



flowcode.com/p/cQJETFAM7?fc=0