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OTD Capstone Symposia

Fall 12-9-2021

Occupational Therapy & Black Women's Hair: An Educational Course

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Recommended Citation

Jones, R., & MacDermott, S. (2021, December 9). Occupational Therapy & Black Women's Hair: An Educational Course. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesfall2021/16

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Occupational Therapy & Black Women's Hair: An Educational Course

Rajaé Jones; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

BACKGROUND

Styling one's hair is an important occupation as a part of a beauty routine, yet there is a limited amount of occupational therapy-based literature that focuses on the occupation of hairstyling, or on the connection between hairstyling and occupational identity. Hairstyling specifically within the Black community plays a major role in one's occupational identity. While hair care practice is a typically common activity, it carries "critical identity-related meanings" among Black women (Ndichu & Upadhyaya, 2019). Adding to the gap on hairstyling, there is no occupational therapy-based literature on the subject focused on the population of Black women.

PROBLEM

Occupational Therapists (OTs) are currently lacking knowledge regarding the cultural importance of hairstyling within different communities and the impact on occupational identity.

PURPOSE

To develop an educational program for OTs on the cultural importance of hairstyling for women within the Black community and the effects it plays on their occupational identity and ultimately occupational performance throughout their different life stages.

85% stated they would want education on haircare interventions for Black women.

METHODS

Theoretical Framework:

Adult Learning Theory

Occupational Science Concepts:

• Form, Function, and Meaning

Process:

Phase 1: Survey Distribution

• A Microsoft Form with a completion time of <15 minutes.

Phase 2: Program Development

Phase 3: Pilot Test

- 6 attendees
- Presented through Microsoft Teams (webinar).

Phase 4: Program Evaluation

- 100% rated Excellent "improved knowledge of historical context"
- ~83% rated Good "more confident in knowledge of tools/products"

RESULTS

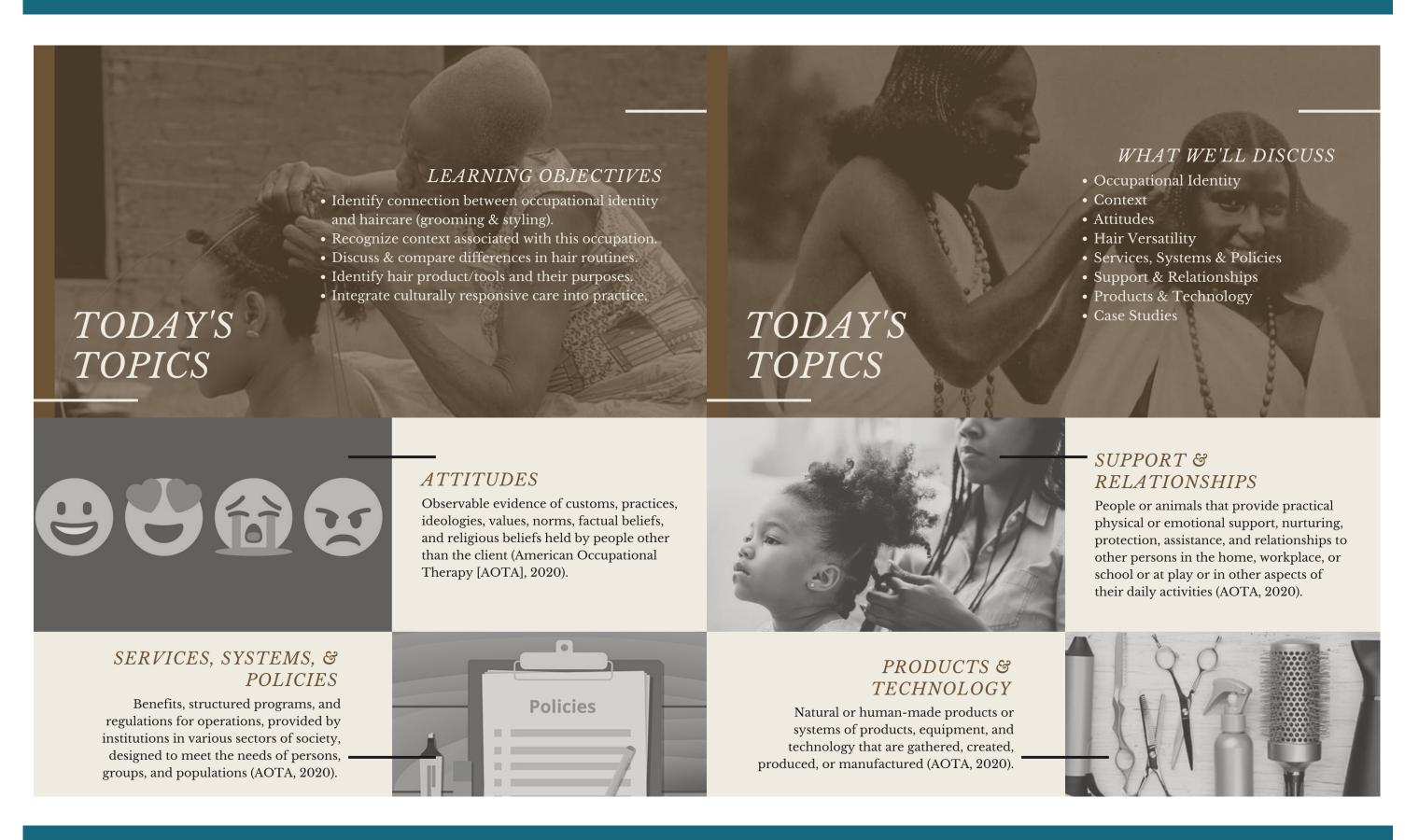
Original research was conducted to answer the question: What is the current knowledge, attitudes, and application of haircare (grooming & styling) as an intervention in occupational therapy. The study consisted of 60 participants.

92% believe that haircare is an important intervention.

I feel that I am knowledgeable on the needs of Black women's hair.



RESULTS: PROGRAM



DISCUSSION

Strengths of the Project:

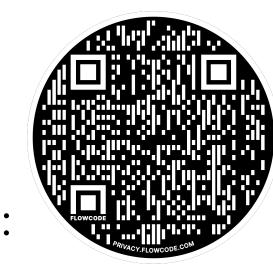
- Offers interactive activities and discussions.
- ~66% (Excellent)/~33% (Good) "the activities were relevant to objectives"
- Openly welcomed topic to discuss.
- ~83% rated Excellent "overall satisfied needs for better understanding of the occupation of haircare for Black women"

Limitations of the Project:

- Limited participation due to COVID-19.
- Currently no occupational therapy or occupational science literature.

Next Steps:

- Present at 2022 OTAC Annual Conference.
- Make an AOTA approved CEU course.



Acknowledgements: Special thanks to my Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, and my mentor Dr. Amber Armstead.

References