

Summer 8-12-2021

## The Role of Occupational Therapy in Promoting Lifestyle Balance for Sex Trafficking Survivors

Grace Woo

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, g.woo@usa.edu*

Becki Cohill

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, bcohill@usa.edu*

Susan MacDermott

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, skmacdermott@gmail.com*

Karen Park

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, kpark@usa.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonessummer2021>

---

### Recommended Citation

Woo, G., Cohill, B., MacDermott, S., & Park, K. (2021, August 12). The Role of Occupational Therapy in Promoting Lifestyle Balance for Sex Trafficking Survivors. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonessummer2021/19>

This Poster/presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the OTD Capstone Symposia at SOAR @ USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, Summer 2021 by an authorized administrator of SOAR @ USA. For more information, please contact [soar@usa.edu](mailto:soar@usa.edu), [erobinson@usa.edu](mailto:erobinson@usa.edu).

# The Role of Occupational Therapy in Promoting Lifestyle Balance for Sex Trafficking Survivors

Grace Woo, OTS; Dr. Becki Cohill OTD, OTR/L, Dr. Susan MacDermott OTD, OTR/L, and Dr. Karen Park OTD, OTR/L

## BACKGROUND

Sex trafficking survivors experience difficulty in engaging in meaningful occupations and maintaining lifestyle balance. Occupational therapists are specially trained to understand the person’s physical, mental, emotional, environmental, and occupational barriers and equip them to promote occupational engagement and consequently, quality of life.

### Theoretical Frameworks:

1. Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) Model
2. Life Balance Model (LBM)

## PROBLEM

There is limited evidence-based practice on the role of occupational therapists working with sex trafficking survivors to promote lifestyle balance.

## PURPOSE

*To provide an occupation-based program to sex trafficking survivors to promote occupational balance for the purpose of independent living*

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Observations
- Informal Interviews
- Concept Map
- Nine areas of Occupation (OTPF, 4<sup>th</sup> ed)

*“School used to be the only priority for me and I didn’t focus on anything else. I want to keep it a priority but be more balanced with other important things as well.” -participant*

## RESULTS

### Themes Found in Needs Assessment:

- Support in self-care
- Areas of desired skill development
- Improved social participation
- Other areas of occupation

### Main Theme from Needs Assessment:

- Difficulty balancing all the important activities in one’s life

### PILOT PROGRAM (HOUSING EXPLORATION)

Week 1	Exploring the neighborhoods of San Diego using AreaVibes.com and “livability” score of a neighborhood; searching for apartments in several neighborhoods
Week 2	Education on the financial aspects of independent housing, used budgeting tool through cacareerzone.org
Week 3	Community outing to apply lessons from weeks 1 and 2, discussion on next steps for housing
Week 4	Review of past weeks, participants discussed personal goals for housing

*“I learned that transitioning back into the community is possible” - participant*

## PROGRAM: “LIFESTYLE BALANCE”

**Vision:** Finding Balance for Independent Living

**Mission:** A skill development program to help sex trafficking survivors in San Diego live a meaningful, balanced life

### General Program Goals:

1. Promote participants’ knowledge and skills
2. Enhance participants’ quality of life through improved attainment of lifestyle balance
3. Enable participants to modify their approach and/or mindset to engaging in occupations to promote lifestyle balance

### PROGRAM DESIGN

Block 1	Week 1	Finding Priorities
	Week 2	Establishing a Routine
	Week 3	Managing Time
	Week 4	Avoiding Burnout
Block 2	Week 5	Eating Well
	Week 6	Working Well
	Week 7	Socializing Well
	Week 8	Living Well

## EVALUATION

- Occupational Balance Questionnaire
- Staff feedback
- Anonymous participant feedback
- Participant feedback during individual occupational therapy sessions

## DISCUSSION

The pilot program demonstrated that the use of occupation-based programming with an intense focus on an identified need over several weeks promoted reported learning and engagement. These findings supported the development of the 8-week program to promote lifestyle balance for sex trafficking survivors with the eventual goal of independent living in the community.

## OT IMPACT

Occupational therapy can promote occupational engagement for sex trafficking survivors by improving skills, providing adaptations for the task, teaching regulation strategies, and much more. Additional programs need to be conducted to establish evidence-based interventions so that more occupational therapists can provide services for this population.

### References

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain & process 4<sup>th</sup> edition. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74, S1-S87.  
<https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>

Acknowledgement: Special thanks to GenerateHope and Kimberly Hariman