Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, Summer 2021

Summer 8-12-2021

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

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

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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, 4th 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

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<tr>
<th>Block 1</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Finding Priorities</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Establishing a Routine</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Managing Time</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Living Well</td>
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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.

Acknowledgement: Special thanks to GenerateHope and Kimberly Hariman

References