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Transition Program to Postsecondary Education for Students with Traumatic Brain Injury

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BACKGROUND

- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a condition that occurs due to an external blow to the skull that damages the brain (Carulli et al., 2018).
- Many students with TBI face physical, cognitive, environmental, and social challenges in their transition to post-secondary education (Bedell et al., 2017).
- Individuals with TBI experience challenges such as fatigue, headaches, poor anger management, limited transportation, and regulating their social behaviors which potentially hinders their academic successes at postsecondary education (Bedell et al., 2017; Jacobs et al., 2017; Bedell et al., 2017).

PURPOSE

- Enhance a transition program with an OT lens to meet the student's needs in physical, social, environmental, and/or cognitive barriers to improve their successes at postsecondary institutions.
- Provide a smooth transition to postsecondary schools.

METHOD

- This program took place at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC). Mt. SAC is a community college located in Walnut, California.
- There were a total of 12 ABI students who participated in the transition program.
- Needs assessment surveys were given to the students enrolled in the ABI program and to the faculty members. Structured observations took place at the ABI program in Mt. SAC to understand the program's daily schedule and identify the students' current benefits and needs.
- The transition program was held both in-person and remotely for approximately 30 minutes every week.
- For the program outcome, a pre-survey was given to the participants before the program implementation and the post-survey was given after the program implementation. The pre-survey and post-survey results were compared and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the transition program.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs Assessment Questions for ABI Students: Stress management, time management, social skills, organization skills, transportation, college resources, student concerns, in-person learning, and virtual skills.

Needs Assessment Questions for Faculty Members: Skills necessary for the student's transition to postsecondary education, student awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, resources of postsecondary education options, and rights through the ADA and IDEA policies.

Needs Assessment Site Observation: Many students required assistance when navigating the Mt. SAC school website and knowing which tasks to complete for the day. Few students needed repeated assistance for attention to tasks and moving forward with the assignments.

Needs Assessment Result: Three themes of student needs were identified: Virtual learning techniques and skills, time management, and social skills. The transition program focused on the topic of virtual techniques and skills after discussion with mentor/site supervisor.

RESULTS

The transition program was guided by Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model to examine how the person, environment, and occupation factors affect the student's occupational performance to enhance their transition to post-secondary schools.

Transition Program Subtopics: Zoom settings, Zoom etiquette, Starting Zoom, Log In/Log Out on Canvas, Submitting assignments on Canvas, How to Request for Accommodations, How to make Academic/Personal Appointments

Program Outcome: The pre-survey and post-survey results were compared and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the transition program.

Project Outcome: Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Results

42% less students experienced difficulties with virtual hybrid learning tools such as Zoom and Canvas.

After the transition program, 50% more students felt confident with requesting accommodations.

All the students stated to feel confident with making academic/personal counseling appointments after the transition program, which is an 84% increase.

Students have become more familiar with the zoom etiquette

All the participants found the information presented to them as helpful

Half of the students reported needing help with using canvas for assignments to find and complete to-do tasks because they had difficulties knowing which assignments to complete and how to complete the assignments due to their challenges in cognitive skills post-injury.

Potential Result Inaccuracy:
- Few students stated that they knew how to do certain tasks independently when completing the survey questions, however according to the ABI staff member and site observation, the students needed help. Therefore, some of the student's answers to the pre-survey and post-survey did not correlate with the staff reporting, demonstrating inaccuracy in the program outcome.
- Based on the comparison of pre-survey and post-survey results, there is an inconsistency with the total number of participants who completed the survey, as some participants skipped questions during survey completion.

DISCUSSION

For the program outcome, there was an overall significant positive result. After the program, fewer students experienced difficulties with using virtual hybrid learning tools. The majority of the students felt confident with making academic counseling appointments and requesting accommodations. Many became familiar with the zoom etiquette, and they found the information presented to them helpful in their transition. Alternatively, there was a lack of significant outcomes with students needing constant assistance with finding and completing tasks on canvas. This may be due to their ongoing challenges post-injury, such as having poor memory and executive functioning skills. The overall outcome of the transition program was positive, with minor changes to the program for further enhancement.

SUSTAINABILITY & NEXT STEPS

- Project outcome and results were shared with the ABI faculty members
- The virtual learning skills resources are available on the Mt.SAC school website for ABI students and faculty members.
- The virtual learning skills PowerPoint slides will be used for future ABI students by the faculty members.
- Continued project enhancement by identifying and meeting student needs at Mt. SAC potentially by future OTD students

Scan to view project outcome graph result

Scan for references