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Program to Increase Occupational Therapy Inclusion in Community Mental Health Practice

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Program to Increase Occupational Therapy Inclusion in Community Mental Health Practice

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BACKGROUND

Occupational therapists are qualified mental health providers, but services are often underutilized, and practitioners frequently lack recognition in their role as mental health providers (Brooks & Bannigan, 2018; D'Amico et al., 2018; Ramafikeng et al., 2020). Limited numbers of occupational therapists in the mental health community creates further difficulty understanding the professions' role within this setting (AOTA, 2020; Estrany-Munar et al., 2021).

PROBLEM

Inadequate numbers of occupational therapists work in the community to treat individuals with mental health conditions (Brooks & Bannigan, 2018; D'Amico et al., 2018; Ramafikeng et al., 2020).

PURPOSE

To create a program to advocate for the profession of occupational therapy to increase capacity for occupational therapy practitioners in community-based mental health services.

Project Objectives:

- Develop a 2-hour workshop
- Create workshop objectives
- Advertise the workshop
- Conduct the workshop

METHODS

Setting: South Florida Community Mental Health Drop-in Center

Development and Implementation:

- Direct observational hours at a community mental health center.
- Virtual networking with community mental health organizations and constituents.
- Direct collaboration with the site to identify methods for OT funding and reimbursement in community mental health settings.
- Implementation of a 2-hour virtual workshop advocating for increased occupational therapy inclusion in community mental health.
- Program evaluation form emailed to participants via Google Forms.

Workshop content:

- OT in community health
- Community mental health services
- Guest speakers: Certified peer specialists
- Barriers that limit inclusion
- Methods for increased inclusion
- Exploration of billing and reimbursement

Inclusion Criteria:

- OT practitioners and students
- Other mental health providers
- General healthcare providers
- Mental health advocates

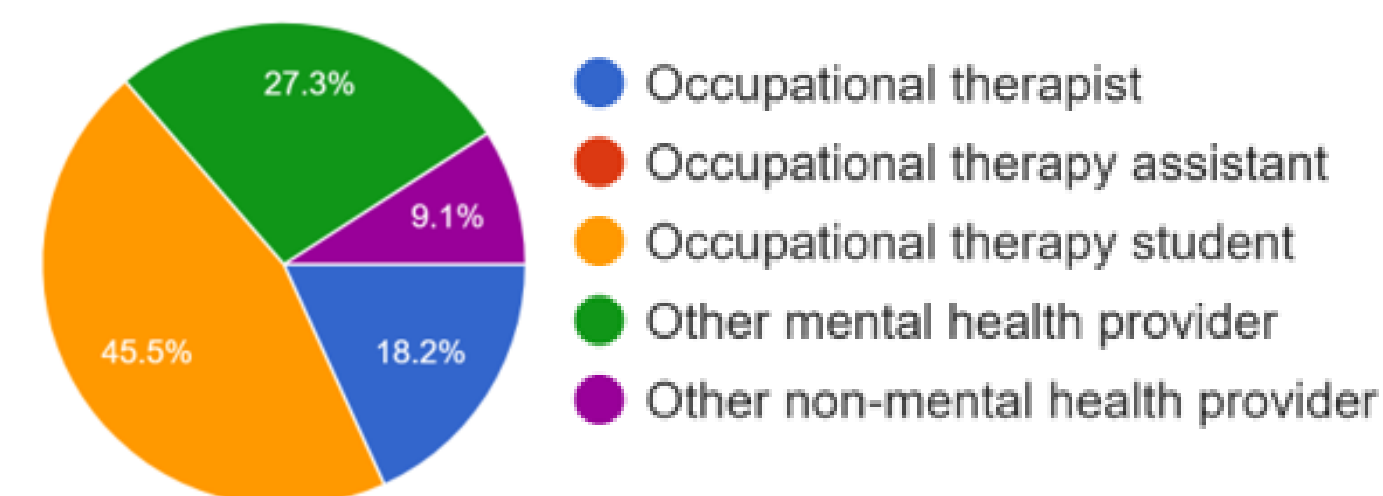
Theoretical Framework:

The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO)

Special thanks to Chris Yoculan, Site Supervisor and Adult Services Director, and Laura Diaz de Arce, Power-of-Peers Supervisor and Certified Peer Recovery Specialist

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Participants: 22 total participants attended the workshop. All participants completed the program evaluation form.



Program Evaluation Results:

- Most participants (86.4%) found the workshop very easy to understand or somewhat easy to understand (9.1%).
- 100% of participants reported they found the workshop meaningful and engaging.
 - i.e., interactivity, organization, relevance
- Feedback included adding visual aids and more polls, however, most respondents indicated no changes were needed.

Additional Outcomes: Virtual networking directly with the site resulted in an opportunity to develop a pilot program directly incorporating OTs in community mental health settings.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

- The virtual workshop increased participant knowledge on the roles, limitations, and opportunities for OTs in community mental health settings.
- The inclusion of multiple professions increased multi-disciplinary understanding regarding the role of OT in mental health.
- Future recommendations to include offering multiple workshops to increase attendance and response rates.

Table 1: Program Evaluation Responses regarding increased understanding of workshop content

Questions:	Responses
How effective was the workshop at increasing your understanding of OT's role in community mental health (CMH)?	Very effective (VE): 90.9% Somewhat effective (SE): 9.1%
How effective was the workshop at increasing your understanding of the barriers to OT inclusion in CMH?	VE: 100%
How effective was the workshop at increasing your understanding of methods to network for OT services within CMH?	VE: 95.5% SE: 4.5%
How effective was the workshop at increasing your understanding of methods to advocate for OT services within CMH?	VE: 95.5% SE: 4.5%
How effective was the workshop at increasing your understanding of how billing and reimbursement impact OT mental health services?	VE: 90.9% SE: 9.1%

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