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Disability Advocacy in Fashion Design

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Disability Advocacy in Fashion Design

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UNIVERSITY of ST. AUGUSTINE
for HEALTH SCIENCES

BACKGROUND

Efforts to promote social participation are seen with resistance from disabled children due to the further risk of bullying found by Pinquart (2016). Additional influences to participation include social isolation, social anxiety, and inappropriate social behaviors in the person's life (Lange & Grajo, 2021). The influence of clothing only adds to the complexity of social interactions that continue into the workspace as an adult (Rutkowski et al., 2021). Clothing not only has an influence on the perception of the individual but can add to the stigma surrounding disability if they are not seen as fashionable (Esmail et al., 2021). Adaptive clothing pieces are utilized to maximize independence during dressing for individuals who require alternative fits, closures, or fabrics in their garments (Esmail et al., 2021). Ready-to-wear adaptive pieces for all occasions are not widely sold with an even further limitation on fashionable choices. While options are emerging as seen by Target and Tommy Hilfiger, the more expanded styles of adapted fashion options are more rare at these big box stores, creating an additional exclusivity of these items in niche and specialty stores.

PROBLEM

There is limited variation within clothing for disabled individuals which can impact disabled individuals' occupational participation during dressing (Kabel et al., 2016; Bhakta et al., 2017). OT has a limited role in adapted fashion design and can contribute towards collaborating with fashion designers to implement education for current and future designers.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this capstone project is to identify occupational therapy's role in designing ready-to-wear adaptive clothing through understanding and bridging the gaps in fashion education for designers. By highlighting the problems being faced by the disabled community, occupational therapy can incorporate ways to promote accessibility and opportunities for interprofessional collaboration to create effective long-lasting change.

RESULTS

SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

Fashion designers and students

- Frequency of use of physical and digital sketchbooks
- Knowledge on adaptive fashion and designing for non-standard body types
- Education diversity in the curriculum

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS CREATED

A sketchbook and accompanying app was created to provide disabled and non-standard body representation

- The book follows a workbook format with several chapters of information regarding adaptive fashion with review sections before introducing case studies to assist the student designer in creating adaptive pieces to address inaccessibility.
- The app is designed to be utilized with or without the book and provides the same content but with the addition of alternative and inclusive body croquis (sketches) representing plus-size, petite, and disabled body types.

ADVOCACY PRESENTATION TO FACULTY

- The faculty and student presentations on topics including disability pride, identity-first language, "inspiration porn", and person-centered storytelling.



DISCUSSION

The handful of retailers who have made the next step into incorporating adaptive apparel within their physical stores has made a great step into inclusion. The continuation of that momentum is needed to ensure every person achieves their highest level of independence. In supporting fashion creation teams through advocacy and education, we will promote the creation of adaptive fashion and enhance the current market.

NEXT STEPS

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Seek opportunities outside of your workplace to understand dressing needs within the disabled community either in person, online, or CEU courses.

CONTINUED ADVOCACY

- Inclusion and diversity in our daily lives dispel stigma to the benefit of daily participation of the disabled community.
- Advocate for disabled needs and adaptive fashion within the fashion industry and to other therapists.

QR CODES

Deliverables



References



Presentation Workbook