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Occupational Therapy Services Within Women's Shelters for Women with Disabilities Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

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Occupational Therapy Services Within Women’s Shelters for Women with Disabilities Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Meira Becirovic; Jessica De Brun, OTD, OTR; Angela Labrie Blackwell, PhD, OTR

BACKGROUND

- One in four women are subjected to violence throughout their lifetime (Sanctuary for Families, 2022).
- Research states that seventy percent of individuals with disabilities experience some form of abuse (Sanctuary for Families, 2022).
- According to Sanctuary for families, 70-85% of cases involving women with disabilities and IPV are overlooked (2022).
- Impact of IPV on occupational engagement:
 - 1.Reduced employment/financial independence
 - 2.Increased physical and social isolation
 - 3.Loss of power and autonomy
 - 4.Compromised health and wellness
 - 5.Increased risk for various types of occupational injustice (Ballan & Freyer, 2020; Javaherian-Dysinger et al., 2016).
- OT practitioners have the knowledge and skills to address the needs of women with disabilities who experience IPV who are living in women’s shelters. However, there is a lack of training on IPV and its implications, limited research available, and OT engagement with the topic (Baird et al., 2020; Ballan & Freyer, 2020).

PROBLEM

Although OT practitioners have the knowledge and skills to address the needs of women with disabilities who experience IPV who are living in women’s shelters, OT practitioners do not have a framework or practice guideline, which interferes with engagement and career pursuits in this area of practice

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to create a guidebook for OT practitioners to address the needs of women with disabilities who experience IPV who are living in women’s shelters

METHODS

Guided by the Occupational Justice framework and KAWA River Model, this capstone project consisted of four phases implemented over a 14-week period.

Strengths and Needs Phase

- Interview shelter staff and women residing in the shelter
- Assess shelter environment and ADA accessibility
- Review all existing programs and services at the site

Guidebook Development Phase

- Revise the outline for the guidebook
- Build the content for each section
- Provide guidebook to capstone team, seek feedback, and revise guidebook

Guidebook Revision Phase

- Develop a peer review questionnaire and select peers
- Distribute guidebook and questionnaire to selected peers
- Collect and review feedback from peers

Dissemination Phase

- Complete and submit a proposal to a state conference

GUIDEBOOK CONTENTS

I. Introduction to Intersectionality of IPV and Disability

- Understanding the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities who experience IPV

II. ADA Compliance and Accessibility

- Checklist for OT practitioners to utilize ADA accessibility within the shelter

III. Recommended Assessments for Women and Children

- Adult and pediatric assessments to help target specific needs and challenges faced by survivors of IPV

IV. Recommended Interventions for Women and Children

- Adult and pediatric interventions based on identified needs.

V. Advocacy and Social Justice

- Introduction to advocacy and social justice
- Occupational justice framework
- Community resources and how to get involved

VI. Self-Care for Occupational Therapists

- Compassion fatigue and occupational stress
- Measuring stress with self-assessments
- Strategies for self-care

VII. Conclusion and Implications for OT Practice and Research

DISCUSSION

Significance

- Addresses a critical need for women with disabilities who experienced IPV and reside in shelters.
- Provides a comprehensive resource for OT practitioners to meet identified needs.
- Advocates for increased awareness and changes to integrate OT services in domestic violence shelters.

Implications for Practice and Research

- OT practitioners can enhance engagement and independence for women with disabilities in shelters who experienced IPV (Ballan & Freyer, 2020)
- Training shelter staff on challenges faced by women with disabilities experiencing IPV can improve quality of care (Anyango et al., 2023)
- Collaboration with women with disabilities, women’s groups, and related organizations supports inclusivity and comprehensive care in shelters (Njelesani et al., 2021)

REFERENCES

EmpowerHER GUIDEBOOK:



This project did not involve human subjects and did not require IRB approval.



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