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Supporting Oaxacan Youth Mental Health, Academic Achievement, and Cultural Connection

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Supporting Oaxacan Youth Mental Health, Academic Achievement, and Cultural Connection

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BACKGROUND

Oaxacans are an indigenous group of people who reside in or have migrated from the state of Oaxaca in Mexico (Kresge, 2007). Although they are of Mexican origin, Oaxacans are distinguished by their unique culture and spoken indigenous languages. Oaxaca is comprised of 17 indigenous groups, each with different indigenous languages (Kresge, 2007). Despite the collective nature of the community-challenges arise due to the migration to the USA and acculturation to western culture (Elder, 2012). Children adapting to a new culture outside of their home might face struggles which can lead to mental health concerns (Rusch et al., 2020).

PROBLEM

Oaxacan Indigenous youth in the U.S. experience generational, cultural and social conflicts that impact their participation, performance and wellbeing, yet there are no occupation-based programs that address their mental health, academic achievement, and cultural connection In San Diego.

PURPOSE

To develop a culturally-informed occupational therapy program for Oaxacan indigenous youth that will motivate and provide the skills needed to navigate different cultures while encouraging belonging.

METHODS

Literature Review

- Migration, family separation, health access attribute to mental health challenges for Oaxacan indigenous adults
- Environmental influences of Oaxacan Youth mental health
- Barriers to social and educational participation and performance

Needs Assessment

- Formal and informal Interviews with community leaders
- Conversation with Oaxacan community members
- Meetings with anthropologist, educators, and mental health advocates

Models and Theoretical Frameworks

- Person Environment Occupation Performance Model (PEOP)

DELIVERABLES

- Program manual: lesson plans for youth and parent workshops
- Youth activity handouts, resources
- Parent resources on cultural promotion
- Guest Lectures: USAHS Conditions and Scholarship of Practice, Mano a mano Foundation, Castle Park High school

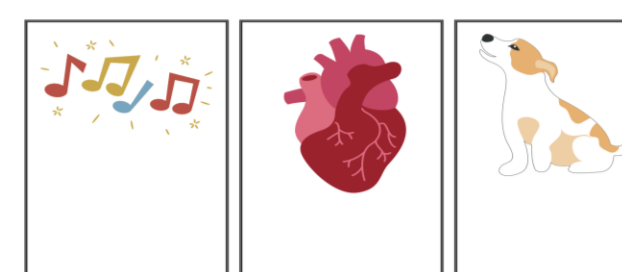
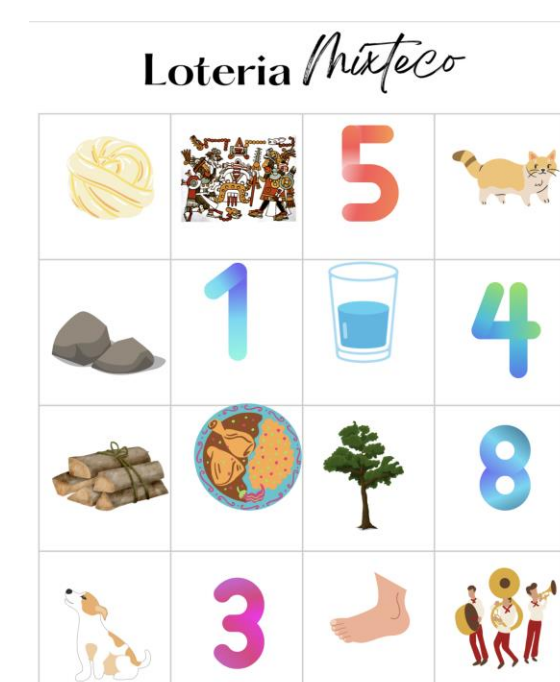
PROGRAM

Program Objective

- Develop a culturally responsive program targeting identity, pride, mental health, and community of Oaxacan youth

Program Structures

- Emotional regulation activity
- Cultural, mental health and educational concepts
- Occupation based activities



Capstone Sites

- Jardin Mixteco at Access, San Diego, CA
- Cultivando Raíces (Pilot held at a local library), San Diego, CA
- Valley Center High School, Valley Center, CA
- Montgomery Middle School STEAM Magnet, Linda Vista, CA
- Mano a Mano Foundation, Encinitas, CA



NEXT STEPS

- Establish the role of Youth Coordinator at Jardin Mixteco
- Discussions on presentation possibilities to be conducted at OTAC
- Invited by local library to host event
- Collaborations with Mano a Mano Foundation
- Potential to continue working with Valley Center TOSA
- Establish Cultivando Raíces Business

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REFERENCES

