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Occupational Therapy Return to Work Program for Individuals Following a Traumatic Brain Injury

Kalynn Johnson, OTS; Lisa Griggs-Stapleton, PhD, OTR

BACKGROUND

- Resultant cognitive, physical, and psychosocial deficits impact ability to acquire and maintain employment following a traumatic brain injury (TBI) (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2012)
- Around 60% of individuals face unemployment following their injury (Cuthbert et al., 2015)
- Return to work services are often costly and unobtainable due to insurance or stringent qualifications to participate (Wyse et al., 2020)

PROBLEM

Individuals with a TBI experience difficulty returning to the workforce and often lack the necessary resources to facilitate a successful return to work.

PURPOSE

To develop a resource that enables occupational therapists to facilitate return to work for clients with a TBI

Outcome Objectives

- To expand the knowledge of how occupational therapists can facilitate a successful return to work for clients following a TBI
- To create an online resource for occupational therapists
- Survey occupational therapists after program implementation

METHODS

Steps

1. Conduct a thorough literature review surrounding return to work following a TBI
2. Conduct a needs assessment on-site at Rehab Without Walls
3. Create a website containing a program, tools, and resources
4. Implement the program
5. Gather feedback and analyze outcomes

Conceptual Framework

- The Model of Occupational Self-Efficacy (Soeker, 2009)

Inclusion Criteria

- All participants must have a TBI
- Demonstrate cognitive abilities at level VII or higher on the Rancho Los Amigos Revised Scale (Hagen, 1998)
- Have a strong desire to return to work

Optimize Website



RESULTS

The Optimize Program

www.OptimizeRTW.com

Program Courses

- Optimize 1: Returning to Pre-Injury Worker Role
- Optimize 2: Returning to the Workforce Through Seeking New Employment

Additional Tools and Resources

- Career exploration activities
- Information on legal rights in the workplace (accommodations and protection from discrimination)
- Example accommodation request letter
- Symptom tracking worksheet
- Employer communication log
- Mock job application
- Mock interview questions
- Recommended comprehensive work assessment
- Tips for goal writing

Participants

- 5 participants
 - 4 participants in Optimize 1
 - 1 participant in Optimize 2
- All participants varied in number of sessions completed due to scheduling, visit limitations, and date of beginning the program

Program Outcomes

- All participants made subjective and objective progress toward their goal of returning to work
- One participant returned to the workforce
- Due to time constraints, no participants completed all steps of the program

Post Implementation Survey Results

All survey responses from occupational therapy staff indicate:

- The Optimize Program is valuable in assisting occupational therapists facilitate return to work for clients following a TBI
- The Optimize website contains a host of helpful resources
- The Optimize website is user friendly

Conclusions

- All participants were continuing to make progress as the implementation phase came to an end
- An extended time frame for implementation may have improved outcomes
- Fortunately, the occupational therapists on staff now have access to the Optimize Program and can continue providing return to work services

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