

Sensory Processing and Emotional Regulation Training Workshops for Teachers of Head Start



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Volunteers of America Los Angeles

Services Provided by VOALA

- Affordable housing
- Assistance for people with disabilities
- Assisting homeless people
- Behavioral and mental health services
- Children, youth, and families' programs
- Services for older adults; substance use disorders
- Veterans

Head Start and Early Head Start

- Major services offered by VOALA to families with low income, homeless families, those with disabilities, and children in foster care.
- Early education for children 18 months to 5 years of age, child development, parenting support, nutrition and preparation for elementary school.

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Resources and additional training needed for their staff
- Classrooms were not providing enough sensory stimulation for their students
- Gaps in teacher training that could be filled by an occupational therapist
- Teachers' main concern was dealing with challenging behaviors in the classroom

Area of Need: Program to educate staff and teachers on sensory processing and emotional regulation of students



Literature Review

- 5%-16% of children in the U.S. have difficulties processing and integrating sensations (Schaaf, Dumont, Arbesman, & May-Benson, 2018).
- Connection between children having sensory processing and sensory integration challenges and the way they partake in daily activities, academics, play, and leisure compared to children that do not (Miller-Kuhaneck & Watling, 2018; Schaaf, Dumont, Arbesman, Benson, 2018).
- Groups led by a therapist have been shown to have improved group outcomes in regards to parent training programs versus groups without a trained therapist (Kingsley & Mailloux, 2013).

Purpose Statement

To provide the staff and teachers of Head Start and Early Head Start at Volunteers of America Los Angeles with a larger knowledge base of sensory processing and emotional regulation for children in all aspects, including classroom design.

Learning Objectives

To create a program to educate Head Start teachers on sensory processing and emotional regulation

To apply knowledge on sensory processing and emotional regulation in order to aid teachers in classroom design

Develop skills in program evaluation by analyzing and providing evidence for the effectiveness of the program

Classroom Design Consultations

- Created Classroom Sensory Checklist to provide 1:1 consultations and recommendations for teachers
- Observed the items, tools, décor, and strategies used in classrooms that supported the sensory processing and emotional regulation of students

Teacher Training Workshops

- 6, 1-hour workshops for teachers and staff
- Workshops addressed classroom management, understanding how sensory processing difficulties can present in the classroom, and classroom design to better meet the sensory needs of their students
- Material delivered in forms of lectures, questionnaires, discussions, learning activities, and hands-on activities
- Participants:
 - 40 teachers from Head Start and Early Head Start recruited by site managers

Topics

1	Sensory Processing and Emotional Regulation
2	Sensory Processing Disorder and Other Diagnoses
3	Sensory versus Behavior
4	Vestibular and Proprioception
5	Visual, Tactile, & Auditory
6	Olfactory, Gustatory, and Interoception

Deliverables

Physical and Electronic Binder

Planning Worksheets and Outlines

Tip Sheets

Research Articles

Resources List

Executive Summary

Project Outcomes

Classroom Design Consultations

- No classroom had Calm Down Corner
- "This is helpful", "I wish we had this before", and "I wish we had more of these" – Teachers

Teacher Training Workshops

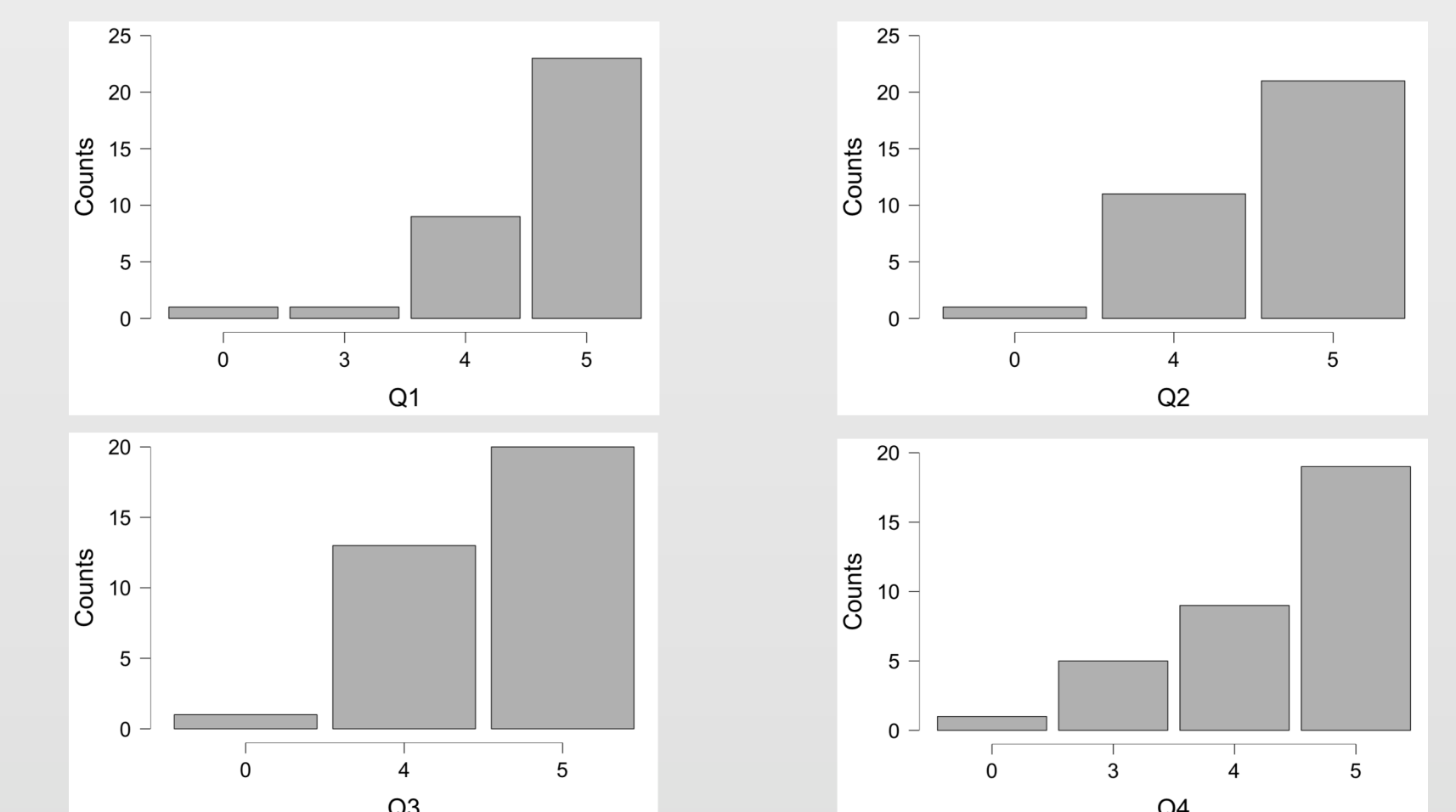
Survey Questions:

- The course materials (slides, video, handouts, etc.) were helpful and appropriate
- The training improved my skills and knowledge on the training topics
- I will apply what we learned in training to my work
- What is your overall assessment of the workshop

Likert Scale:

- 0=blank, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree
- Question 4 had a different scale: 0=blank, 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, and 5=excellent

Responses for Workshop 4:



Discussion

- Teachers' knowledge increased after receiving training
- Based on results, teacher training workshops may help better meet students' sensory needs in the classroom
- School-based occupational therapists could extend their scope of practice by implementing teacher trainings to better meet students' needs in the classroom
- This program could be done as primary prevention in order to address all students' classroom sensory and emotional regulation needs to enable better education and participation

References available upon request.