Achieving Beyond Limits: An Occupation-Based Wellness Program for Adults with Special Needs

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DCE Site: Able Arts Work (AAW)

- Non-profit organization located in Long Beach, CA
- Art-based adult day program - Achieve Results Together (ART) Center
- **Mission:** To provide inclusive services to individuals of all abilities through creative art (art therapy, music therapy, dance/ movement, drama/theater, visual arts, media, and digital arts)

Needs Identified

1. Increase self-regulation skills, coping skills, & overall mental health
2. Increase social engagement and community awareness
3. Improve functional skills in daily activities

Literature Review

Themes:

Life Challenges

- Deficits in social, practical, conceptual, and executive functioning skills; Decreased communication and learning ability (Richardson et al., 2020)
- Depression, anxiety, and behavior issues (Richardson et al., 2020)
- Issues with problem solving, decision-making, social isolation, and decreased social engagement (Stanojević et al., 2022)
- Challenges in daily activities, mobility, and adaptive behavior at home, work, school, and community settings (Perez & Crowe, 2021)
- Barriers: societal stigma, environmental barriers, lack of available programs, financial resources, and limited community support (Perez & Crowe, 2021)

Interventions

- Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), Instrumental ADLs, functional skills training, social interaction & leisure, community engagement (Blaskowitz et al., 2021; Waldman-Levi et al., 2019)
- Social skills training, self-advocacy, self-image, (Perez & Crowe, 2021)
- Mindfulness & yoga (Richardson et al., 2020; Hartley et al., 2019)

Learning Objectives

1. Developed a 6-week occupation-based wellness program that improved quality of life, health, and well-being for adults with IDD
2. Implemented & evaluated a 6-week occupation-based wellness program that improved quality of life, health, and well-being for adults with IDD
3. Improved interdisciplinary collaboration and increased advocacy for the occupational therapy profession

Program Description & Implementation

- **Purpose of a 6-week occupation-based wellness program:**
  - Increase quality of life, health, & well-being
  - Improve health management
  - Increase social & community engagement
  - Increase functional life skills

Program Outline

- **Health Management (week 1 & 2)**
  - *Activity 1:* Zones of Regulation Board
  - *Activity 2:* Mindfulness & Yoga
  - *Activity 3:* DIY Aromatherapy Lavender Bag
  - *Activity 4:* Lifestyle Balance
- **Social Participation & Community Engagement (week 3 & 4.5)**
  - *Activity 5:* Fairy Succulent Garden
  - *Activity 6:* New Year Vision Board
  - *Activity 7:* Community Exploration
- **Life Skills (week 4.5, 5 ,& 6)**
  - *Activity 8:* Time Management
  - *Activity 9:* DIY Laundry Folding Board
  - *Activity 10:* Money Management
  - *Activity 11 & 12:* Grocery Shopping Part 1 & 2

Group Session

- **Frequency:** 3-4x / Week
- **Duration:** 45 minutes / Session

Design & Population

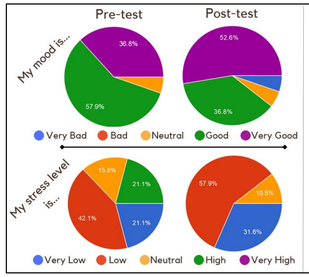
- Pre-test & Post-test study design
- **Sample Size:** 4 Participants
- **Inclusion Criteria:**
  - Age 21+ years
  - Diagnosed with mild-moderate IDD
  - Verbal
- **Exclusion Criteria:**
  - Non-students of AAW
  - Non-english speakers
  - Visually impaired
  - Nonverbal

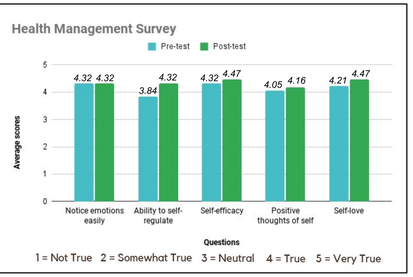
- **Purpose of staff training modules:**
  - To advocate for the occupational therapy profession
  - To equip staff with knowledge and resources to enhance quality of care
  - To provide caregivers with educational support to meet their clients basic needs

Evaluation Outcomes

Quantitative Data

Scan QR code to view all survey results





- Three total pre-/post surveys specific to a focus area (Health Management, Social Participation & Community Engagement, and Life Skills)
- Participants' *mood increased* & *stress levels decreased* after group sessions
- Bar graphs illustrate *improvements* in self-regulation, self-efficacy, positive thoughts, & self-love

Qualitative Data

	Happiness	Level of Independence	Choices & Decisions	Social Relationships
Pre-test	Desire to increase engagement in occupations	Desire to complete daily activities more independently	Lack of opportunities to make choices	Lack of social relationships
Post-test	Positive thoughts & feelings	Increased understanding & independence	Increased comfort in speaking up & making decisions	Sense of belonging

- Pre-/post semi-structured interviews conducted prior to & after program implementation
- Program yielded *positive themes* in all categories after implementation

Scholarly Deliverables

Program Manual + Materials

- Group protocols for each activity
- Printable materials that align with program

Staff & Caregiver Resources (English & Spanish)

- Handouts that align with program + additional resources

Staff Training Modules

- Topics:
  - Role of OT
  - Dunn's Sensory Processing
  - Sensory Strategies

AAW In-Service

- Presented in-service to all AAW staff virtually via zoom regarding OT & program outcomes

Limitations & Implications

- Small sample size
- Time constraints
- Multiple activities
- Absences
- Abstract concepts

- Advocacy for OT at adult day programs /non-traditional settings
- Increase evidence-based research for adults with IDD

References

Scan QR code for references:

Permission granted from AAW to share client photos

Acknowledgements: Sincere gratitude to my mentors, Heidi and Dr. Attenni, for the immeasurable support and guidance. Special thanks to all AAW staff for a memorable experience. This would not be possible without you all, thank you!