

# Effectiveness of Sensory-Based Strategies in a Virtual Adult Day Program

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## DCE Site Description

- Able ARTS Work (AAW) – Achieving Results Together (ART) Center is a non-profit organization in Long Beach, California providing therapeutic art services throughout Southern California over the last 40 years
- The site encourages and support artists with disabilities to foster self-identity, a sense of community, and wellness with expressive art classes
  - Staff: art and music therapists, creative instructors, and direct support staff
  - Services: visual art, music, theater/drama, and movement

## Identified Needs

- Provide **occupation therapy (OT) perspective** to address client behaviors and reduce adverse events during virtual adult day program classes
- Introduce **sensory-based strategies** and resources
- Develop **sensory-based programs** to address the needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)

## Literature Review

- Limited research on OT sensory-based programs for adults with IDD (Blaskowitz et al., 2021)
- Individuals with developmental or behavioral conditions, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have higher prevalence of Sensory Processing Issues (SPI) and difficulties with sensory integration (SI) (Bodison and Parham, 2018)
- OT practitioners have distinct skills to support adults with IDD to facilitate occupational participation (Haertl, 2014)
- The Zones of Regulation® curriculum introduces emotional awareness and positive self-regulation activities (Kuypers, 2021)
- Therapeutic activities emphasizing emotional awareness and sensory input positively enhance social behaviors of adults with IDD (Blaskowitz et al., 2021)

## Learning Objectives

- Provide **sensory-based strategies and recommendations** to an interdisciplinary team in a non-traditional practice setting
- Develop and implement a **virtual sensory-based, self-regulation program** for an adult day program
- Create **sensory-based video tutorials** for staff and caregivers to improve client participation during virtual classes

## Project Description

### Sensory-based Self-regulation

#### Client Course Program

Purpose: address client behaviors and improve virtual class experience using sensory-based activities and self-regulation strategies

- 11 clients
- 45-minute virtual group class sessions, twice a week, 5 times per week, for 8 weeks

- Zones of Regulation approach on emotional awareness
- Utilization of sensory tools in self-regulation
- Introduce sensory-based activities



### Staff & Caregiver Resource

#### Program

Purpose: bring awareness on the importance of sensory-based activities to support client goals and improve occupational participation

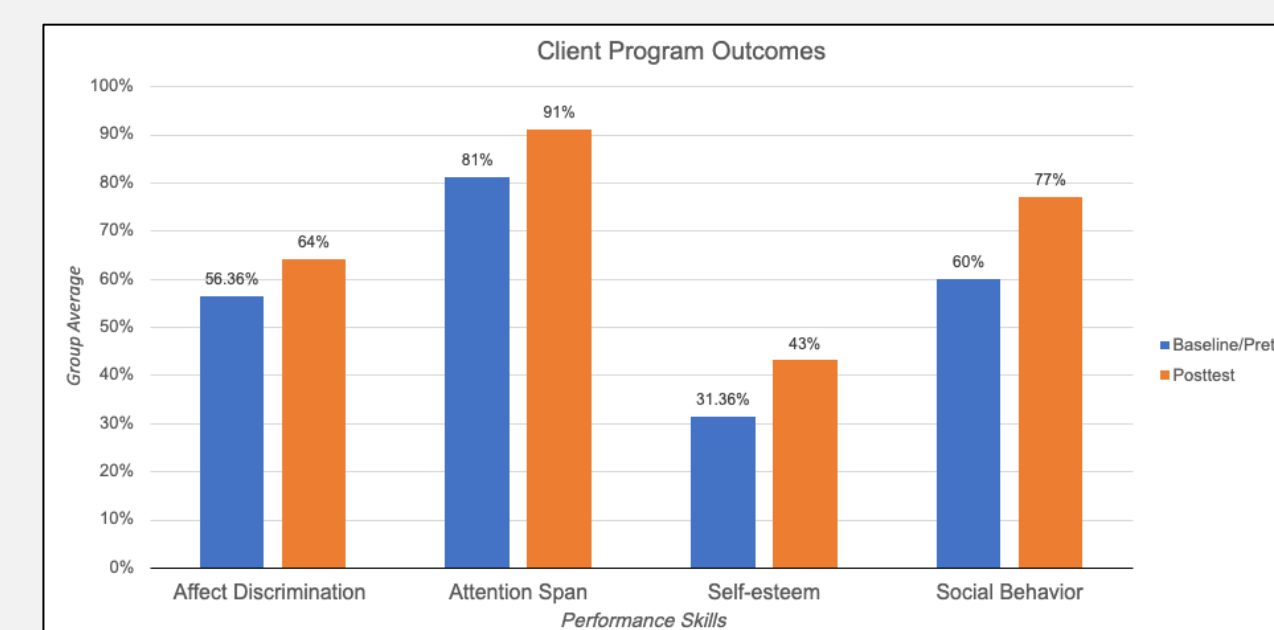
- 4 AAW staff and 4 client caregivers
- Environment Set-up Checklist
- Development and distribution of video tutorials based on the following topics:

- Sensory-based strategies
- Ergonomics
- Establishing routines
- Self-regulation activities
- Increase client autonomy

## Project Outcomes

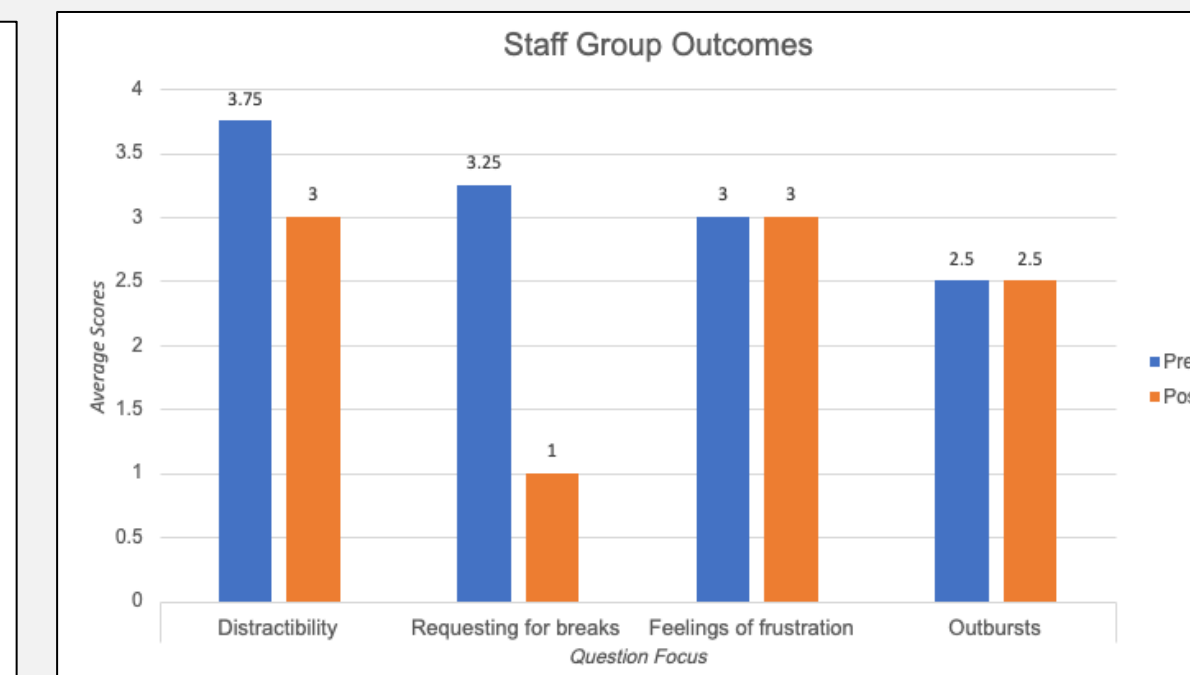
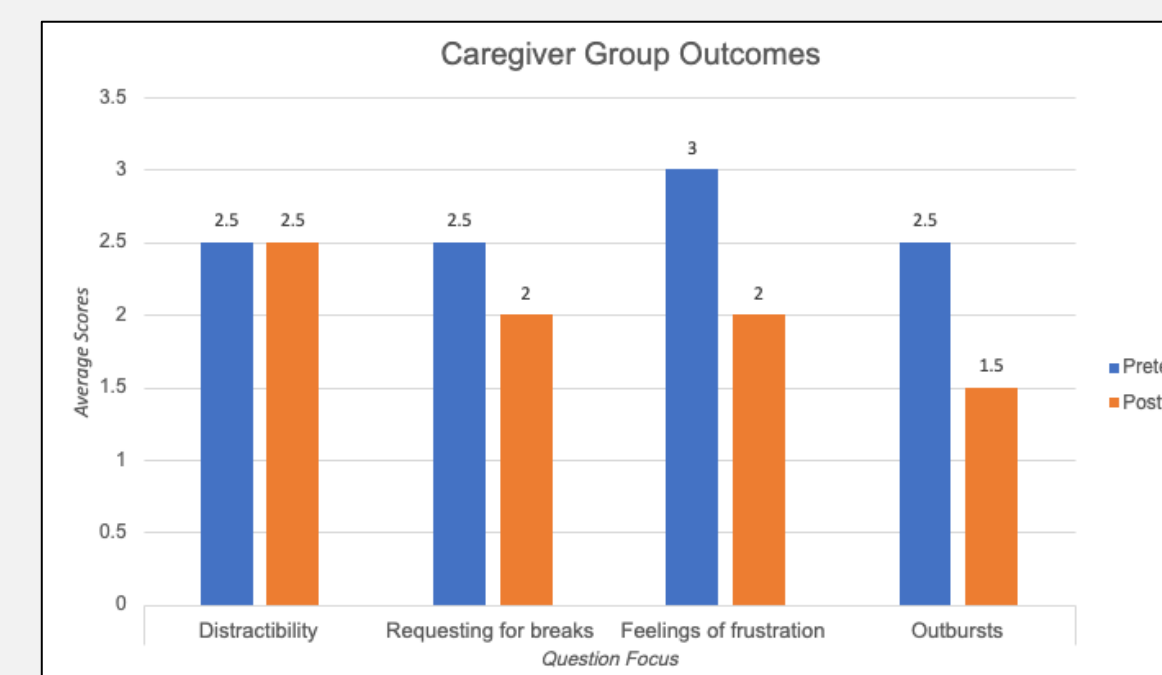
### Client Course Results:

- Increased emotional awareness, attention span, self-esteem, and social behavior
- Percentage scale: 0% -100%



### Staff and Caregiver Results:

- Reduced need for breaks due to clients' ability to self-regulate during classes
- Caregivers observed less feelings of frustrations and outbursts at home
- Five-point Likert scale: '1' never – '5' always



## Scholarly Deliverables

- Environmental Set-up Checklist
- Sensory-based Course Description, weekly treatment plans, and class agendas
- Zones of Regulation resources
- Sensory-based Video Tutorials:*

Optimal Environment	Transition Back to In-person Learning	How to Make Sensory Tools



## Future Directions

- Continuation of sensory-based strategies in current and future AAW ART Center classes
- Reimplementation of sensory-based programs of future OTD capstone student or AAW staff and instructors
- Advocate for positions in non-traditional settings to develop more research and evidence-based practice to support the value and effectiveness of OT



## Discussion & Implications

- Sensory-based strategies increased emotional awareness and self-regulation skills
- Improved virtual adult day class experiences through the lens of an OT
- Sensory tools were effective in increasing feelings of calmness within program participants
- Sensory-based programs created opportunities for client, staff, and caregiver advocacy, improving occupational participation in non-traditional settings

## Acknowledgements

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## References

Available upon request