

TBI/Concussion Peer Support Groups at UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program



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Description of the DCE Site

- Non-profit 501(c) in Los, Angeles, CA
- Multidisciplinary health care team who work closely together to provide an extensive treatment plan
- Team: neurologists, neuropsychologists, occupational therapist, a dietician, and research staff
- **Mission:** is to create leading research-based discoveries, provide progressive diagnosis and treatment, and disperse the knowledge of “sports-related concussion and brain health to the broader community”

The Needs Assessment

1. The development of a TBI age-appropriate community support group.

2. The development of caregiver training resources.
3. The need to help improve in-person clinic COVID-19 protocols.
4. To address psychosocial factors by exploring barriers and resources.

Key Points of the Literature Review

Common Themes

Among those suffering from a TBI/concussion:

- Social isolation, decreased community re-integration, and anxiety and depression

Background

Positive outcomes of peer support:

- Increased QOL, Improvements in mood, feelings of legitimization & increased emotional coping

Gaps & Limitations

- Lack of OT facilitated groups & consensus on addressing psychosocial impacts
- Lack of information on social support affects on rehabilitation
- Limited research on concussions specifically
- Implementation of online TBI supports groups considering COVID-19

Learning Objectives

By the end of week 14, the doctoral student:

1. Implemented a TBI/Concussion community support group at BrainSPORT.
2. Developed advanced clinical knowledge and skills by utilizing evidence-based interventions to evaluate and treat the traumatic brain injury/concussion population.
3. Increased their interdisciplinary collaboration skills at BrainSPORT.

Program Description & Implementation

Capstone Focus Areas: Program Development and advanced clinical practice skills

Weekly Caseload: 11-16 patients per week

Support group session format:

Group format for each session								
1.	Introduction							
2.	Ground Rules							
3.	Ice breaker							
4.	Wellness activity							
5.	Explanation of topic:							
6.	Guided questions/Open discussion							
7.	Generalize, application, summarize (wrap up)							
8.	Post survey							
9.	Introduction of planned topic for the following week							

Pilot Group Weekly Topics					
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Ice Breakers	Lifestyle Balance Wheel & Goal Making	Occupation (school/work)	Physical Health and Nutrition	Sleep and Rest	Social and Emotional

Note: Topics that were not covered include “sleep and rest” and “social and emotional”.

Beta Group Weekly Topics					
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Ice Breakers	Navigating the Healthcare System & sharing personal stories	Lifestyle Balance Wheel	Follow up on Lifestyle Balance Wheel & Goal Making	Occupation (school/work)	Social and Emotional

Note: Topics that were not covered include “sleep and rest” and “physical health and nutrition”.

Program objectives:

1. To create a space where individuals feel confident and safe to share their lived experiences regarding their recovery
2. To help educate participants in occupational therapy wellness principles, by providing emotional coping strategies during times of distress.
3. To increase self-efficacy taking self-directed measures towards concussion recovery.

Implementation:

- OT led back-to-back 6-week programs on 6 different topics
- Each group met for 1 hour weekly on Zoom

Evaluation & Outcomes

The **effectiveness** of the program was evaluated through:

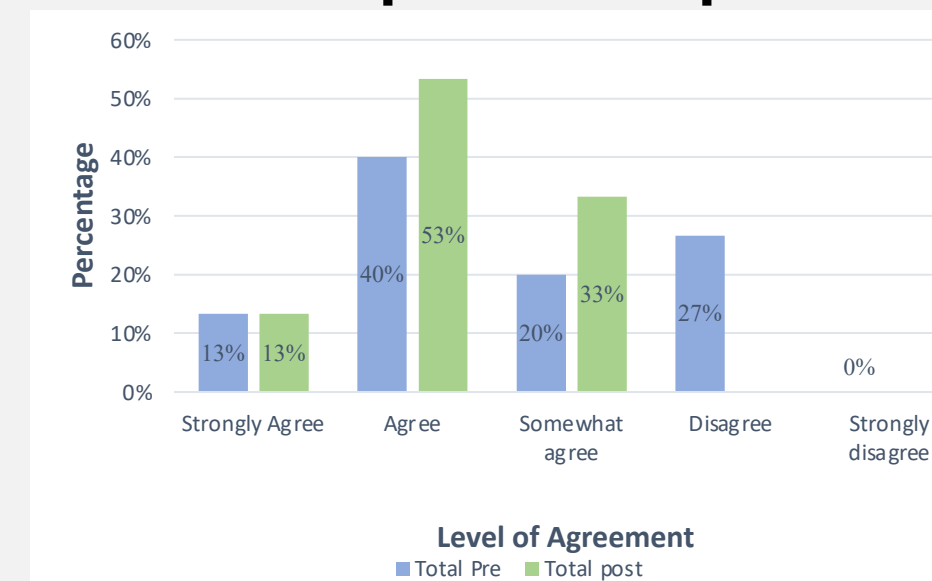
- attendance surveys
- Five-point Likert Scale pre-post surveys
- Direct feedback

Pilot & Beta Post-Survey Question Topics:

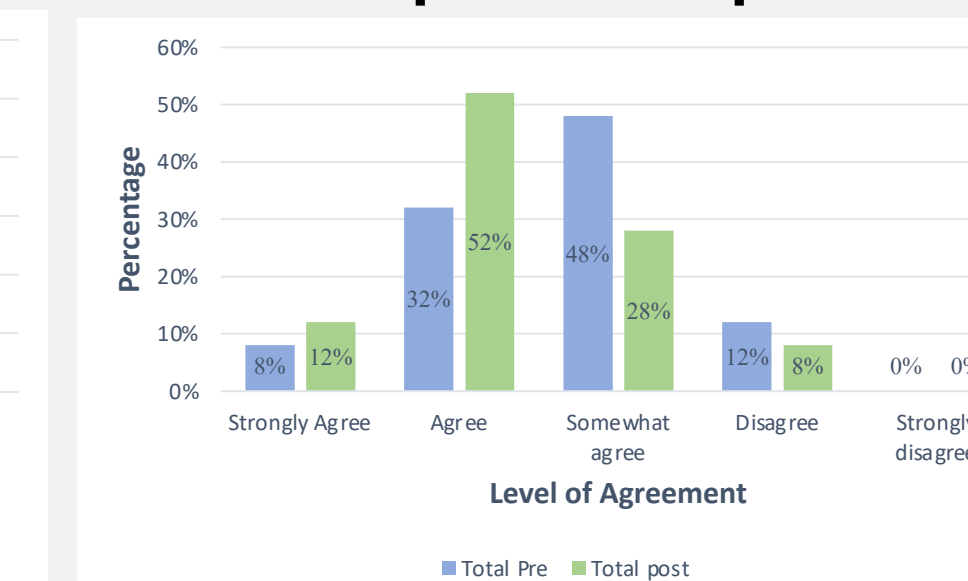
- Social Support
- Relatability
- Emotional Coping Strategies
- Self-Efficacy
- Overall Wellbeing
- Symptom Impact on daily life

Quantitative Outcomes

Pilot Group total responses



Beta Group total responses



Qualitative Outcomes

Pilot Group responses

Post Session Themes:

- Benefitting from open dialogues
- Sharing common lived experiences
- Navigating social interactions
- Enjoyment of wellness activities
- Feedback to have more than 6 sessions

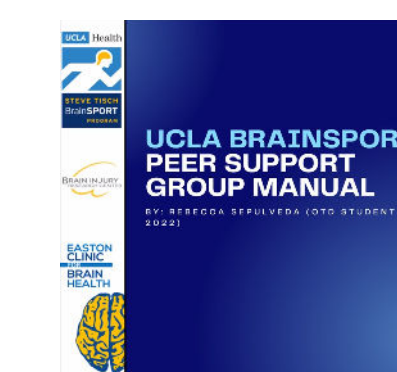
Beta Group responses

Combined Themes:

- Benefitting from shared personal experiences & stories
- Not feeling isolated/alone
- Enjoyment of wellness activities
- Gaining a sense of community, support, advice, & confidence

Scholarly Deliverables

- 6-week protocol manual on how to lead occupational therapy-based support groups
- Week-by-week schedule of topics
- Online handouts, worksheets, and resources



Conclusion

- Outcomes support the efficacy of occupational therapy-based and led peer support groups.
- Provided positive findings on participants' emotional coping strategies, perceived self-efficacy, and overall wellbeing.
- By the end of the program, the participants gained a community they could connect with, were instilled with confidence and became empowered to take control of their symptoms and lives to re-integrate into their daily routines and activities.

Acknowledgements

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References

Are available upon request.

