



# An Occupational Therapy Nutritional Wellness Program for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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### OV's Willing Workers

OV's Willing Workers is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in Los Angeles, California that operates a day program for adult clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their mission is "empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to reach their full potential." The day program consists of five different departments: behavioral support, creative expression and art therapy, communication and language development, recreational activities and leisure development, and life skills and independence training.

### Needs Assessment

**Wellness Programming:** Clients would benefit from occupational therapy programming focused on improving wellness through engaging in occupation-based activities.

**Life Skills Curriculum:** Clients would benefit from use of an evidence-based life skills curriculum to structure therapeutic activities to maintain and develop various life skills.

**Staff Training:** Staff come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and would benefit from increased training to promote confidence and competence when working with their clients.

### Learning Objectives

#### Objective 1

By the end of 14 weeks, the capstone student will develop a wellness group for adults with special needs.

#### Learning Activities:

- 1a. Conduct a needs assessment focused on the health and wellness of clients
- 1b. Develop wellness group protocols

#### Objective 2

By the end of 14 weeks, the capstone student will implement and evaluate a wellness group for adults with special needs.

#### Learning Activities:

- 2a. Implement wellness groups weekly
- 2b. Collect and analyze data on the effectiveness of groups

#### Objective 3

By the end of 14 weeks, the capstone student will create a written life skills curriculum for adults with special needs.

#### Learning Activities:

- 1a. Conduct research on evidence-based life skills programs
- 1b. Develop a life skills curriculum

### Project Description and Implementation

**Weeks 1-2:** Conduction of a needs assessment which revealed a need for meal preparation programming at the site.

**Weeks 3-6:** Development of group protocols and session outlines for each week and development of observational assessment tool to administer prior to and post group program.

**Weeks 7-13:** Implementation of nutritional wellness group sessions 45 minutes per week with 7 participants who had mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.

**Weeks 13-14:** Administration of observational assessment post-group, data collection and analysis of the effectiveness of the group program.

### Project Deliverables


WEST COAST UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY-BASED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FIELDWORK PROGRAM

GROUP PROTOCOL

OV's Nutritional Wellness GROUP

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Model or Theory or Frame of Reference: | PEO   |
| Purpose:                               | The purpose of this group is to improve overall health and wellness through participation in occupation-based activities relating to meal preparation and nutrition.  |
| Dates of Group:                        | 1/8-2/22  |
| Length of Sessions:                    | 45 minutes  |
| Group Goals & Objectives:              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of 6 weeks, clients will increase confidence, participation, and skills in meal preparation and nutrition.</li> <li>By the end of 6 weeks, clients will increase social engagement with other members in the group.</li> <li>By the end of 6 weeks, clients will increase meal prep safety and hygiene skills.</li> </ul> |
| Week 1:                                | Kitchen safety & hygiene, smoothies   |
| Week 2:                                | Protein, carbs  |
| Week 3:                                | Sorting food groups, salad  |
| Week 4:                                | Ingredients (BINGO), snack mix  |
| Week 5:                                | Measuring, ventrator's coodent/cooperates   |
| Week 6:                                | Recipe book, Rice Krispie treats  |
| Each week:                             | recipe card to take home to a book to take home at the end of the group   |
| Membership Criteria:                   | Individuals with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities, can verbally communicate, can understand, and follow simple instructions   |
| Leadership Style:                      | Directive/facilitative  |
| Expected Environment:                  | Kitchen space and group space at OV's Willing Workers   |
| Evaluation Tools/Assessments:          | Site-specific observational assessment with scale of independence   |

Willing Workers Life Skills Coach's Manual



**What are life skills?**  
People use life skills to perform adaptive and functional behaviors and tasks that allow them to deal effectively with the everyday demands of their life.


**How much time should I schedule for this program?**  
This life skills program consists of activities that should take approximately 20-30 minutes when facilitated by a coach to groups of 3-4 individuals. Ideally, this curriculum can be incorporated into the daily schedule and run around the same time every day.

**What skills does this program focus on?**  
The activities target skills in four different areas: personal hygiene/medication management, dressing, meal preparation, and financial management.


**What is in this manual?**  
Within this coaches manual, you will find instructions for setting up, facilitation, and tips for prompting and cueing to increase or decrease the difficulty for each activity and promote successful participation from each individual.

**When should I run these activities with individuals?**  
The schedule of activities should ideally be completed in order and can start fresh every month for repetition and practice of targeted skills.


Group Protocol



Life Skills Curriculum



Coach's Manual



### Discussion

**All group participants showed improved assessment scores** after participating in the group program. Participants with the lowest initial scores and had the greatest potential for improving scores showed the highest increase while clients who scored in the higher range initially showed less improvement. Despite overall improvement in scores, a paired-samples T test shows the increase was not statistically significant with a t value of -3.082 and a p value of 0.027.

Overall, **the implementation of a group wellness program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities proved to be effective in improving skills and overall wellness for participants.**

### Implications for OT Practice

Group outcomes indicate that **adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities benefit from skilled group intervention regarding meal preparation to improve overall wellness and quality of life.** Although quantitative outcomes were not statistically significant, further research could expand on this pilot program to improve its overall effectiveness.



### Literature Review

Findings show that occupational therapy has an established role in the promotion of health and well-being for all populations.

**Gap:** More evidence currently exists for non-occupational therapy interventions for adults with intellectual disabilities compared to occupational therapy-specific interventions.

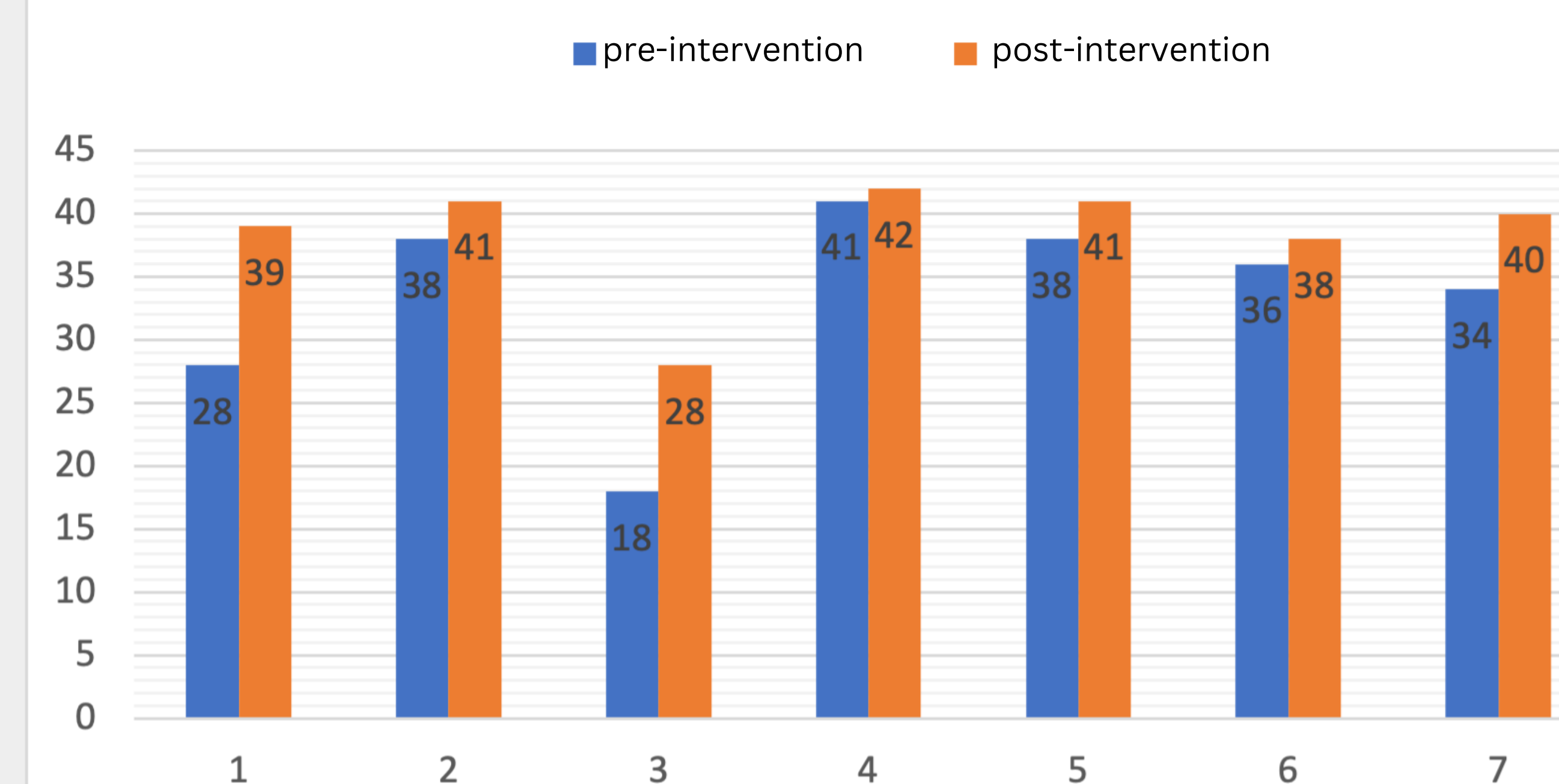
**Themes:** Evidence for health promotion, life skills, group activities, and socio-emotional activities to improve wellness for adults with intellectual disabilities.

### Evaluation and Outcomes

#### Qualitative Themes



#### Pre and Post Assessment Results



### References



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