

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



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DCE SITE DESCRIPTION

VILLA ESPERANZA SERVICES (VES) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the lifespan
Mission Statement: “Providing love, care, and hope for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families since 1961” (VES, 2025)



SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Need for improved policies and procedures to provide consistent, safe and effective community integration
- Need for diverse resources, services, and inclusive community support
- Need for enhanced training in safety, social interactions, and navigation for students

LITERATURE REVIEW

- General policies and inadequate training affect individuals with special needs ability to learn needed skills to participate within their community (Khusheim, 2021)
- Stigmas and prejudice from communities decrease individuals with special needs ability to participate within their community (Terras et al., 2019)
- Lack of adaptability to social, emotional or behavioral skills attribute to difficulties in participation within the community (Giummarra et al., 2022)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a community integration program to increase community participation for students with special needs
2. Implement the community integration program
3. Demonstrate advanced clinical practical skills in a skilled setting

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE Development and implementation of a Community Integration Program for individuals with special needs aged 14 and older to enhance independence, safety awareness, and functional community skills

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Community Integration Program Development
2. Program Implementation
3. Advanced Clinical Practical Skills

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Participants completed a pre/post-survey to gather overall understanding of community integration
- Staff training to improve confidence and effectiveness in community-based instruction

PARTICIPANTS 10 participants (three teachers and seven aides) employed at Villa Esperanza School for the 2024-2025 academic year

DISCUSSION/IMPLICATION

ALIGNING QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

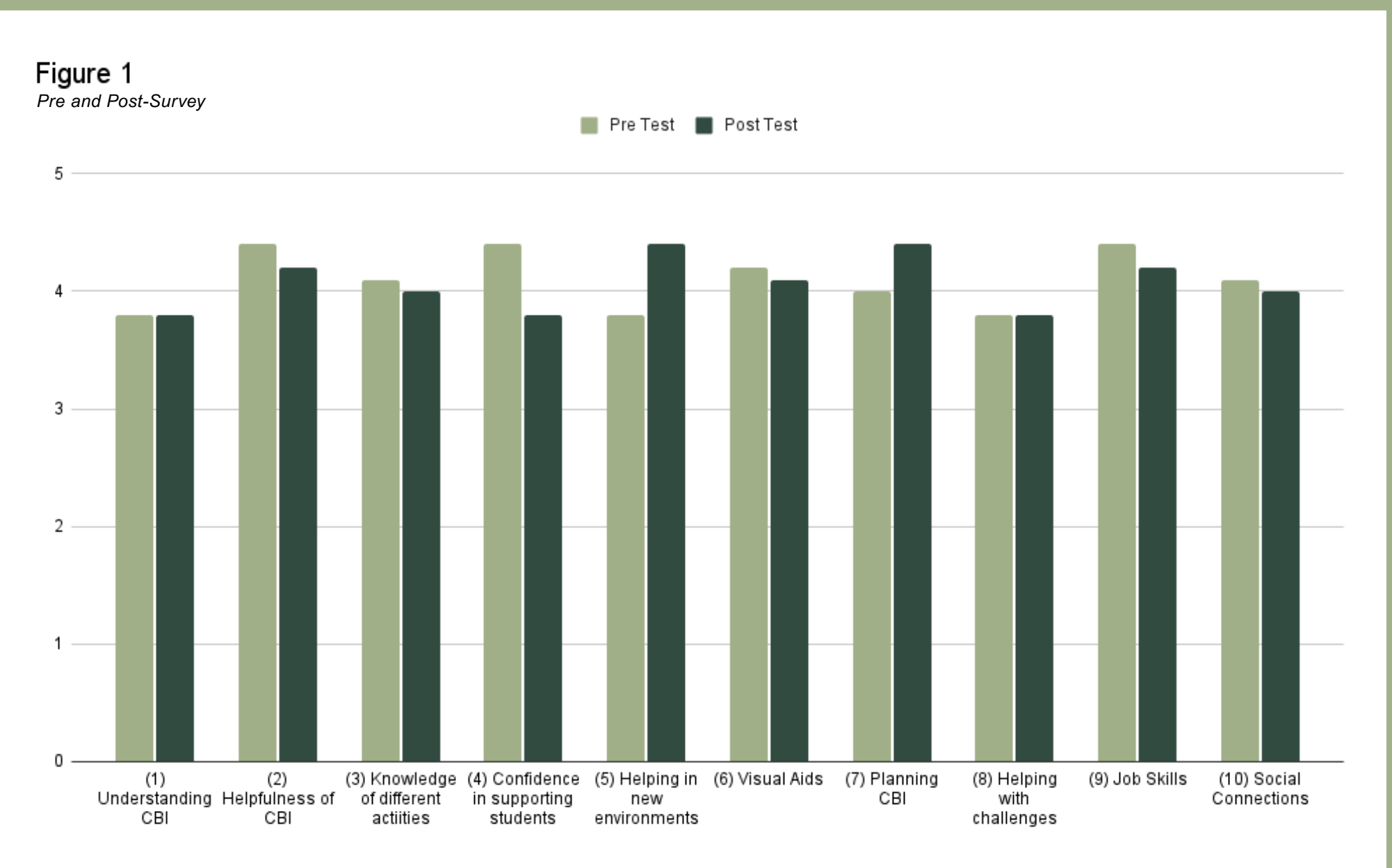
- Improvement and improved clarity of staff roles during community integration
- Qualitative findings indicated improvement in overall awareness and safety during community outings

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTION

- Findings suggest ongoing professional development in community instruction, safety strategies, and communication techniques to further improve staff confidence and effectiveness in supporting students
- Improvement on partnerships with local businesses to continue fostering inclusive environments and provide real-world practice opportunities for students

PROJECT OUTCOMES

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS



Qualitative analysis showed minimal improvement to staffs confidence in planning and helping individuals with special needs integrate into the community

Analysis of pre and post-test scores did not achieve statistical significance

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Safety and Awareness

“Students have better awareness of community signs and the association of their meaning”

Staff Readiness

”I feel better with my understanding of different support approaches and safety rules”

Resources, Tools and Structured Planning

“The structured activities and provided tools have supported my ability to plan and organize community based instruction”

LIMITATIONS

Limited sample size, inconsistent survey responses limited time for implementation and data collection

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A tremendous thank you to my family, friends, and cohort for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this occupational therapy journey. A special thank you to my professors at West Coast University for their invaluable guidance, my fieldwork mentors for shaping my clinical skills, and my capstone site supervisors and collaborators from Villa Esperanza for their support in developing this program. Your mentorship, encouragement, and belief in my growth have been instrumental in my success. This achievement would not have been possible without each of you—thank you so much!

DELIVERABLE PRODUCTS



SCHOLARLY
DELIVERABLES



EVALUATION
MATERIALS



REFERENCES