Welcoming Wellness: A Health Promotion and Chronic Condition Prevention Program Rooted in the Foundations of Occupational Therapy

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**Welcoming Wellness: A Health Promotion and Chronic Condition Prevention Program Rooted in the Foundations of Occupational Therapy**

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### BACKGROUND

- In the US, $3.8 billion is spent annually on managing chronic conditions, which are a leading cause of death and disability (CDC, 2021).
- In the US, 6/10 adults have one chronic condition, while 4/10 have two or more (CDC, 2021; Holman, 2020).
- Health outcomes are impacted by a variety of interrelated factors (e.g. genetics, lifestyle behaviors, social determinants of health, and health literacy) (Bathija, 2018; CDC, 2021; Kalkonde et al. 2018; Sinka et al., 2021).
- Health promotion and prevention programs shown to be effective address multiple risk factors, incorporate meaningful goals, instill intrinsic motivation, and provide self-regulation skills to promote sustainable behavior change (Adams et al., 2019; Sevild et al., 2020).
- Occupational therapists are valuable stakeholders in this practice area. Health promotion is a significant tenet of practice, as outlined by the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF) (AOTA, 2020).
- Both occupational therapists and wellness coaches utilize holistic, client-centered approaches to address behavior change and facilitate motivation and self-determination (Conn & Curtain, 2019; Pettit, 2013).

### METHODS

**Population and Access to Participants**

Populations worked with throughout the capstone included acute care clients, individual and group fitness and wellness participants, and members of my pilot program, Welcoming Wellness. Program participants were recruited via flyers and community advertisements.

**Logan Health Medical Center (LHMC)**

- **Lifestyle behavior-related chronic condition caseload**
- **Client survey on health perceptions, previous program participation, and motivations to participate in programs**
- **Leadership continuing education course and related goals**

**Logan Health Medical Fitness Center (LHMFC)**

- **Completion of Certified Special Population Specialist (CSPS) certification examination prerequisites**
- **Experience in fitness and wellness to inform program development caspstone component**
- **Development and implementation of primary/secondary health promotion and prevention program, including all materials and program modifications using participant feedback.**

### RESULTS

**Explored community wellness and population needs.**

- **Acute care caseload based on chronic conditions**
  - E.g. COPD, CHF, and diabetes.
- **Insight through client survey tool**
- **Poor health self-ratings and dissatisfaction with health**
- **Motivation to remain independent and maintain health**
- **Limited use of health promoting interventions at this level of care, due to time and resource restrictions**

**Developed in-depth understanding of professional leadership.**

- **Continuing education course ( Covell-Pierson, 2021).**
- **Goals of finding my leadership style and advocating for occupational therapy’s role in wellness**

**Completed CSPS certification examination prerequisites.**

- **Experiential hours in patient care, cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, individual and group fitness and wellness, and program development and implementation**
- **Current CPR/AED certification**

**Developed and implemented a primary/secondary health promotion and prevention program.**

- **Welcoming Wellness modules: determinants of health & health literacy; occupational & life balance; meaningful physical activity; functional nutrition; and habits, routines, & roles.**
- **Presentations, individual activities, and group discussion**
- **Participants stated they felt knowledgeable and would use information in the future (Figures 1).**
- **Participants enjoyed the interactiveness and peer collaboration of sessions.**

### DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The opportunity to work with individuals across all stages (including acute care, cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, and wellness participation) contributed to my knowledge of health promotion and prevention. These experiences enhanced my perspective of the physical, mental, emotional, and financial burdens associated with chronic conditions. Wellness coaches at LHMFC have a strong capacity for connecting with those around them, which is a valued quality within occupational therapy practice; both professions have a strong capacity to build rapport with those attempting to make lifestyle behavior changes. The development and implementation of Welcoming Wellness was a culmination of all capstone experiences. Participants varied health backgrounds and prior knowledge of health concepts, which impacted the just-right challenge provided by the program. Future programs may consider delineating primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention with diverse learning opportunities varying in complexity. Multimodal approaches should be used when educating those with chronic conditions (Fields & Smallfield, 2022). Welcoming Wellness including presentations, activities, visual aids, and handouts, and education was delivered through plain language and teach-back methods. Health literacy was presented early in the program, as this is a necessary precursor for health promotion and prevention (Smith & Hudson, 2012). Interprofessional collaboration enhances intervention delivery in health promotion, and it includes healthcare professionals, clients, and caregivers to achieve a more comprehensive plan of care (Fields & Smallfield, 2022). Group interventions can greatly support behavior change, peer support, and self-management; however, ideal group size is believed to be seven to eight and should be considered to support positive group dynamics in programs (Biggs et al., 2020). The findings of my capstone experience indicate a need for advocacy to support occupational therapy’s role in health promotion and prevention, as these components align well with the profession’s scope of practice.

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

**Person Occupation Environment Performance (PEOP) Model**

The three interacting components of the PEOP model include the characteristics of the person, features of the environment, and aspects of the activity or task; the nature of the interaction among these components can positively or negatively impact one’s occupational performance (Baum et al., 2015). The health promotion and prevention program, Welcoming Wellness, acknowledges each component of the PEOP model and how these impact one’s health behaviors and outcomes through educational presentations, activities, group discussion, and goal writing.

**Health Belief Model (HBM)**

The constructs of the HBM include perceived susceptibility, severity, benefits, and barriers to a behavior; cues to action; and self-efficacy (Champion & Skinner, 2006). These constructs acknowledge one’s beliefs surrounding health risks and intrinsic and extrinsic motives for change. The HBM was utilized when surveying acute care clients regarding their health and related behaviors, addressing benefits and barriers to behaviors during the program, and facilitating self-efficacy through education and peer collaboration.

### FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Occupational therapists can contribute to health promotion and prevention efforts by utilizing their full scope of practice, outlined by the OTPF, which includes addressing health-related occupations while considering context and performance patterns.

- OTs should coordinate with interprofessional teams, including healthcare providers and related professionals (e.g. health and wellness coaches, personal trainers, and exercise physiologists).
- OTs should incorporate health promoting interventions when appropriate at all care levels.
- OTs should consider implementing group interventions to promote health and prevent the onset or worsening of chronic conditions.
- OTs pursuing program development and implementation for groups should consider the characteristics of participants (i.e. past medical history, current health implications, and prior level of knowledge) to provide a just-right challenge.
- OTs need to advocate for their role in health promotion and prevention, as these efforts serve the profession as well as clients we serve. Advocacy for this role will improve awareness of the full scope of occupational therapy as well as improve the health of service recipients.

**Figure 1.** Participants ratings of confidence in knowledge and likelihood of future use for session topics.

**REFERENCES**

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