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Enhancing Resident Engagement: Optimizing Meaningful Occupations in Skilled Nursing Facilities

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BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Long-term care (LTC) is a collection of services designed to promote a person's health and personal care needs (National Institute of Aging, 2023).

- An estimated 12 million people need LTC in skilled nursing facilities (Family Caregiver Alliance, 2015).
- 37% of older adults will need SNF placement after turning 65 (Johnson et al., 2021).

Nursing home residents are at risk of occupational deprivation due to the regulations of the facility, physical limitations, and restricted choices of activities (Keane et al., 2023).

- Occupational Deprivation is a lack of opportunities to engage in daily activities beyond their control (Fujii et al., 2021).

Occupational therapists are challenged to incorporate self-directed meaningful occupations and occupation-based interventions to promote the active participation of older adults (Fox et al., 2017).

The purpose of this project was to:

1. Identify meaningful occupations for newly admitted residents.
2. Develop a program to promote meaningful occupational engagement for residents in a SNF.
3. Educate and advocate for occupational therapy's role in promoting meaningful occupations.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This Capstone project was influenced by both the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) (Kielhofner, 2008) and the Occupation Adaptation (OA) Model (Schkade & Schultz 1992).

MOHO provided a foundation for:

- Developing clear roles for the staff to promote resident engagement.
- Developing routines for engagement.
- Correlating physical and mental skills to engage in meaningful occupations.
- Creating an environment to promote engagement.

OA Model provided a foundation for:

- Examining the individual, interaction, and environment in relation to occupational engagement.
- Facilitating engagement in occupations in a new setting.

METHODS

Project Goals

- **Goal 1:** To gain advanced clinical practice skills in a skilled nursing facility with an emphasis on the facility admission process.
- **Goal 2:** To create and implement an interdisciplinary program to enhance meaningful occupations for residents.
- **Goal 3:** To demonstrate leadership by educating staff, students, and OTs on strategies to maintain meaningful occupations for residents.

Program

- Goal: To promote residents' scored occupations on the Meaningfulness and Psychologically Rewarding Occupation Scale (MPRORS)
- Participants recruited from residents who actively participated in the current facility's activities and programs
- Residents were recruited to participate in activities based on the scores of the MPRORS
- 4-week program
 - Group activity therapy: An existing once/week group activity focused on residents' preferences and interests
 - Implemented identified occupations from MPRORS scoring to existing activities and new activities
 - Activities included: Gardening, Painting, Exercise, Exercise, Social Gatherings

Outcome Measures

- *Resident Program*
 - Meaningfulness and Psychologically Rewarding Occupation Scale (MPRORS) (Ikiugu et al. 2021)
 - Used to identify meaningful occupations (1: False for this occupation to 7: True for this occupation)
- *All Staff Presentation*
 - Staff Questionnaire: 5-Point Likert-type rating (1: Never to 5: Always)
 - Used to determine staff's ability and knowledge of how to promote meaningful occupations
- *BHSU Student Education Session*
 - OT Student Questionnaire: 5-Point Likert-type rating (1: Never to 5: Always)
 - Used to determine knowledge of OT's role in managing chronic diseases in a SNF and strategies to promote meaningful occupational engagement
- *Resident and Staff Interviews*
 - Staff interviews: Focused on the admission process and identification of meaningful occupations for residents
 - Resident interviews: Used to determine available meaningful activities and perception of available activities

RESULTS & OUTCOMES

Student Outcomes

- *Clinical Practice in SNF*
 - Successfully evaluated and implemented strategies into the admission process; Gained advanced clinical practice skills with 50% caseload and educational case study; Obtained Allen's Cognitive Level education training
- *Program Development and Implementation*
 - Successfully created program and manual to promote meaningful occupational engagement evidence through program manual and MPRORS scores
- *Staff/Student Education & Leadership*
 - Successful educational session with 11 students from BHSU demonstrated by increased questionnaire scores
 - Successful all-staff meeting education with 25 staff demonstrated by increased questionnaire scores

Program Results (MPRORS)

- 7 residents completed pre- and post-MPRORS
- 5/7 residents recorded an increase in their Psychologically Rewarding scores with an average increase of 3.75 points for each listed occupation
- 6/7 residents recorded an increase in their Meaningfulness score with an average increase of 4.3 points for each listed occupation

DISCUSSION

- This Capstone project highlighted the challenges older adults face residing in an SNF.
- The project emphasized the role of occupational therapy in promoting occupational engagement.
- Various comprehensive strategies were implemented to address the underlying issues of occupational engagement.
- This Capstone project improved staff knowledge, increased resident engagement, and enhanced leadership qualities.
- Project limitations included small sample size, assessment limitations, contextual factors, and generalizability concerns.

IMPLICATIONS

- Person-centered care is crucial for occupational therapists to prioritize residents' interests, values, and goals to promote meaningful occupations.
- Facilities should implement training and education for occupational therapists and staff members working in a SNF to advance skills and knowledge so they can provide high quality evidence-based interventions.
- Occupational therapy has a role in advocating for residents and addressing barriers to meaningful occupational engagement.

REFERENCES

