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Occupational Therapy Intervention to Promote Recovery of Individuals Impacted by Human Trafficking and Service Provider Well-being

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Background and Purpose

- Over 16,500 victims in the United States in 2021 alone (Polaris, 2021)
- Intense trauma and lack of autonomy leads to significant increase in health disparities including a decrease in overall physical, psychological, and psychosocial well-being (Lepianka & Colbert, 2020; Rajaram & Tidball, 2018).
- Multiple studies confirm that there are higher rates of individuals being trafficked from 8 to 27 years old, with an average age of entry falling between 12 and 15 years old (Allen et al., 2023; Chisolm-Straker et al., 2016; Kellison et al., 2019).
- Due to the high intensity of emotions and traumatic experiences that service providers in anti-human trafficking organizations work with, they are at increased risk for secondary traumatic stress (STS), Vicarious Trauma (VT), and compassion fatigue (CF) (Ogińska-Bulik et al., 2021).
- A study conducted by Benuto et al., 2018 found that the prevalence of STS among victim advocates is around 50%.
- Life balance and utilization of self-care practices can mitigate the effects of STS, VT, and CF (Owens-King, 2019; Salloum et al., 2015).
- OT practitioners are equipped to guide leisure exploration, promote habit formation, and assist in maintaining self-care routines (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2020). OT's holistic lens can consider service providers' needs and experiences at work and outside work to provide occupation-based self-care strategies.

One aim of this capstone project was to develop clinical skills in the role of OT when working with individuals impacted by human trafficking. Specifically using a trauma-informed approach to facilitate person and population-appropriate assessments and interventions. The second aim of this project was to assess the needs of service providers related to STS, VT, and CF. An occupation-based well-being program (OBWBP) was developed to target the identified needs. The third aim of my capstone project was to advocate for individuals impacted by human trafficking and OT's role in working in a community-based service setting.

Theoretical Foundation

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) – this approach is defined by four main points: 1). Recognition that trauma has a vast impact beyond just an individual to families, groups, and organizations 2). Identifying signs and symptoms of trauma 3). Integrating trauma knowledge into policy, programming, and practice 4). Avoiding re-traumatization (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA, 2014). This capstone project incorporates a TIC lens for client services as well as interprofessional collaboration and program development for providers and staff. Using this approach, OTs can build resilience through trust, encouragement, and collaboration (SAMHSA, 2014; Occupational, 2020).

Recovery Model – this model bolsters an individual's sense of self-determination and choice throughout the recovery process (Brown et al., 2019). While OT could be identified in any of the four dimensions that support recovery (health, home, purpose, and community), holistic interventions for this population will promote healthy roles and routines while empowering individuals to identify and pursue their purpose (Brown et al., 2019). The Recovery Model will serve to inform client-centered, strength-based plans of care for individuals exiting human trafficking to restore autonomy and a sense of hope for a purposeful, fulfilling future.

Model of Human Occupation (MOHO)- The theoretical core of MOHO is that humans are complete, dynamic, and adaptive systems (Kiehlhofner, 2008). OT interventions will improve occupational performance capacity to engage more independently in life. The MOHO will also inform the service provider's well-being program as it will enhance self-efficacy in self-care habits to combat compassion fatigue.

Methods and Activities

Participants

Call to Freedom Staff: Twelve participants (n=12) took part in the OBWBP.
Clients Impacted by Human Trafficking: Eight female adults (n=8) impacted by human trafficking made up the student caseload.

Assessments / Instruments

Self-Care Inventory

Assessed staff participants' engagement in the five domains of self-care (physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and workplace or professional) before the OBWBP and after the OBWBP

Satisfaction Survey

The Satisfaction Survey was created to assess the OBWBP's strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for future implementation. The survey includes four multiple-choice questions and two write-in questions.

Procedures and Activities

Goal 1 Determine how OT utilizes trauma-informed care in a human trafficking setting.

Goal 2 Advocate for OT's role in an emerging practice setting by promoting OT resources for individuals who have experienced trafficking exiting the shelter/prison/jail setting.

Goal 3 Empower human trafficking service providers to pursue self-care routines to prevent compassion fatigue

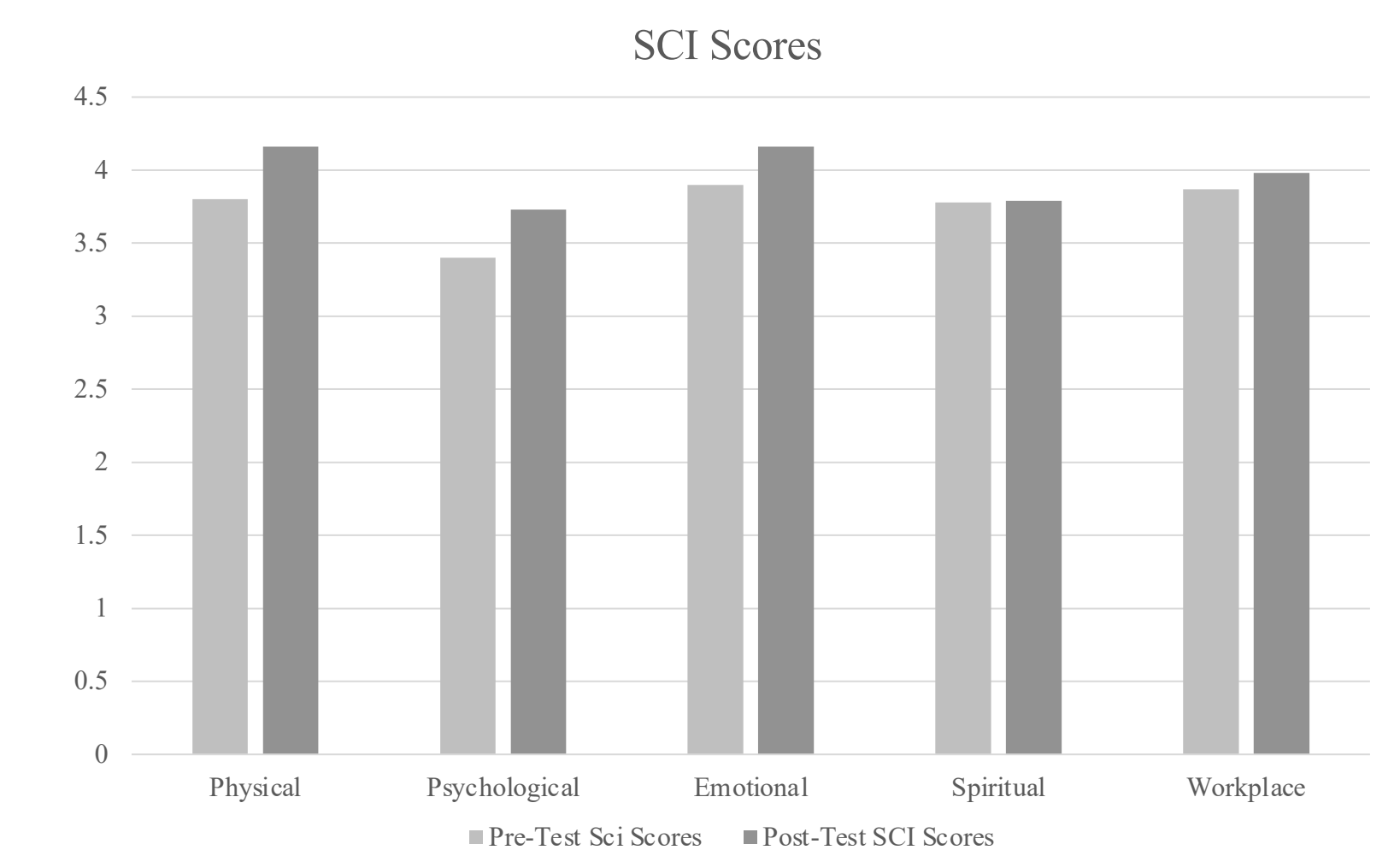
Goal 4 Determine effectiveness of self-care program for human trafficking service providers

Goal 5 Educate community partners and healthcare students about the impact of human trafficking

Results

Self-Care Inventory

- All five domains of self-care) increased.
- physical ($p<0.01$), psychological ($p<0.001$), and emotional ($p<0.002$) self-care domains significantly improved.



Satisfaction Survey

- The average satisfaction with the program was rated 8.9/10.
- 100% added 1 new type of self-care each week
- 100% agreed that all program seminars, activities, and materials were feasible and appropriate
- Strengths: *novelty, challenge, accessibility*
- Recommendations: *increased interaction, accountability*

Outreach Materials

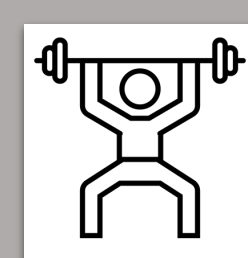
- COTA addressed sleep hygiene, mental wellness, and relationship topics
- Ten individuals were receiving OT service in the jail setting and 18 items were distributed

Future Implications

- OT has a significant role in working with impacted by human trafficking and service providers.
- Providers working with individuals impacted by human trafficking should use TIC and trauma informed approaches
- OTs should use evidence and recommended guidelines for intervention tools in jail, prison, and shelter settings to increase the fit of the person, environment, and occupation.
- Through program development, OTs can provide education, support, and leisure exploration opportunities to aid service providers in combatting the symptoms of STS, VT, and CF.
- OT schools and continuing education courses should continue to teach about alternative service settings and funding sources to increase the impact of versatile OT practitioners.

References

Scan QR code with mobile device for a list of references



Week 1: Physical

Topics

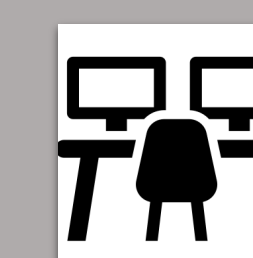
- Nutrition
- Physical Movement
- Chair Yoga Session



Week 2: Psychological and Emotional

Topics

- Daily 5 Minute Moment (Meditation, Breathwork, Devotion)
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation Session



Week 3: Workplace/Professional

Topics

- Work environment modifications
- Office Ergonomic Self-Assessment
- 1 on 1 Evaluations
- Office Home Exercise Program