

University of South Dakota

USD RED

Occupational Therapy Capstone Presentations

Theses, Dissertations, and Student Projects

5-2024

A Program Based on Meaningful Occupations to Improve Perceived Health and Well-being for People Experiencing Homelessness

Annika Overgaard

University of South Dakota, annika.overgaard@coyotes.usd.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://red.library.usd.edu/ot-capstone>



Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Overgaard, Annika, "A Program Based on Meaningful Occupations to Improve Perceived Health and Well-being for People Experiencing Homelessness" (2024). *Occupational Therapy Capstone Presentations*. 135.

<https://red.library.usd.edu/ot-capstone/135>

This Oral Presentation/Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, and Student Projects at USD RED. It has been accepted for inclusion in Occupational Therapy Capstone Presentations by an authorized administrator of USD RED. For more information, please contact dloftus@usd.edu.

A Program Based on Meaningful Occupations to Improve the Perceived Health and Well-being of People Experiencing Homelessness

Annika Overgaard, OTS, Dr. Moses Ikiugu, PhD, OTR, FAOTA

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

- Over 580,000 individuals experience homelessness on any given night (Housing and Urban Development, 2023).
- Individuals experiencing homelessness face a variety of health and well-being issues, including occupational deprivation and injustice (Cunningham & Slade, 2019; Keilhofner, 2008; Marshall et al., 2020a, Marshall et al., 2020b)
- Participating in meaningful occupations can promote balance, health, and well-being (Marshall et al., 2021; Whiteford et al., 2018).
- There is a lack of focus on meaningful occupations in interventions for this population (Fieldhouse et al., 2011; Marshall et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2011)
- The purpose of this capstone experience was to create and administer a meaningful occupation-based program at a drop-in day shelter in Boston, MA.**

METHODS

- I recruited participants for the program in January 2024. The program provided group and individual interventions
- Participants were required to attend sessions twice a week for an hour and fifteen minutes to complete each of the seven modules in the program
- For outcome assessment, I administered the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM), Occupational Circumstances Assessment and Interview Rating Scale (OCAIRS), and the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE) to identify meaningful occupations, barriers to participation, levels of self-efficacy, and occupational participation
- I created module topics based on the initial assessments and the results of the needs assessment which I had previously conducted. The modules covered leisure/interest occupations, social participation, routine establishment, habits, sleep preparation, physical and mental health management, community integration, and promoting self-efficacy
- Intervention activities were based on evidence-based resources and several lessons from Pat Precin's Living Skills Recovery Workbook (2018).
- I also developed a Satisfaction Questionnaire that I administered each week to evaluate participant experiences of the program
- The COPM, OCAIRS, and NGSE were re-administered in week 11 to evaluate program outcomes

RESULTS

- Twelve out of twenty participants completed the nine-week program (attrition = 60%).
- Nine men and 3 women, aged 45 to 75, completed the program (Mean age = 56.60 years, SD = 12.29 years).
- I conducted paired samples t-tests to determine changes in the COPM and OCAIRS scores following intervention
- Occupational performance significantly improved from pretest to posttest, $t(11) = -4.56$, $p < .001$.
- There was a statistically significant improvement in perceived occupational performance and satisfaction with performance as measured on the COPM, $t(11) = -5.04$, $p < .001$.
- There was a statistically significant improvement in occupational participation as measured on the OCAIRS, $t(11) = -7.68$, $p < .001$.
- A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test on the NGSE scores indicated no statistically significant change in perceived self-efficacy, $z = -1.03$, $p < .31$.
- A Friedman's ANOVA indicated a main effect of the intervention on enjoyment, $\chi^2(6) = 13.05$, $p < .04$, and perceived value of the program content as measured on the Post Satisfaction Questionnaire, $\chi^2(6) = 17.14$, $p < .009$.
- Orthogonal pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments showed no main effect of the interventions on perceived enjoyment and value between each week.
- There was no main effect or significant differences between participants' perceived satisfaction, $\chi^2(6) = 8.01$, $p < .24$, ability to participate in meaningful occupations consistently, $\chi^2(6) = 2.68$, $p < .85$, or interest in attending similar sessions, $\chi^2(6) = 4.99$, $p < .55$.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement: This model emphasizes the interconnection between spirituality and individuals' interactions and participation within their environments, occupations, and demands (Polatajko et al., 2007). I used this model as a source of strategies to empower individuals to perform occupations expected of them or that they desired.

Model of Human Occupation: I used this model to help me understand how my program participants' volition, habituation, and performance capacity impacted their goal-directed actions in occupational participation and the impact of these actions on their perceived identity (Kielhofner, 2008). In other words, I aimed to understand how their occupational participation was affected by their habits and routines, how their habits and routines helped them assume roles as expected, and their impact on health and well-being.

Self-Efficacy Theory: This theory emphasizes personal constructs, including mastery of experiences and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1997). Overcoming challenges is essential for promoting self-efficacy. Individuals experiencing homelessness can lose their identity and decrease their perceived self-efficacy, which can impact occupational performance and overall health and well-being (Stein et al., 2008; Whiteford et al., 2020).

Model of Occupational Empowerment: This model emphasizes the effect of context on health and well-being and explains the unhealthy effect of disempowering environments in people experiencing homelessness live. I used this model as a source of strategies for empowering program participants through occupational programming, social support, meaningful occupational engagement, and exploring how to minimize barriers to participation (Sheldon Fisher & Hotchkiss, 2008).

Participatory Framework for Occupational Justice: This framework provided a lens through which I could understand the occupational rights of individuals and the harmful outcomes of injustice to them (Whiteford et al., 2018). It provided strategies for collaborating with my program participants to enable them so that they could advocate for themselves to address occupational injustice (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004).

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- Participants in the Meaningful Occupation-based Program improved in occupational participation, performance, and satisfaction in occupational performance after intervention
- These results indicate a positive impact of occupational therapy programming within this population
- Individuals experiencing homelessness have a variety of health and well-being needs
- These individuals face occupational deprivation, injustice, disruption, and marginalization, which impact their ability to participate in desired occupations
- Occupational participation contributes to an individual's health and well-being
- While there have been many efforts to provide occupational therapy services to individuals experiencing homelessness, there is a need to provide more interventions based on meaningful occupations (Marshall et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2017)
- The findings of my capstone experience demonstrate the value of occupational therapy for this population and, more importantly, the importance of prioritizing occupations that are meaningful to individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Research on the long-term impact of interventions based on meaningful occupation-based programming on people experiencing homelessness is needed.

REFERENCES

