The Inspired Minds Expansion: the Effectiveness of a Functional Support Group on the Mood of Clients with Neurological Impairments

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Recommended Citation

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A Doctoral Experiential Capstone Project Final Report

Presented to the Faculty of Western New England University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Entry-Level Doctorate

in

Occupational Therapy

_____

by

Molly Manning OT/s

July 2024

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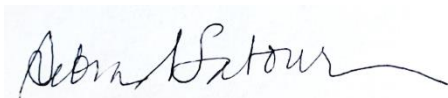
APPROVED BY:

Date:7/27/2024__

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Faculty Mentor

APPROVED BY:

Date: 7/28/2024

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Doctoral Experiential Coordinator

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Abstract

The purpose of this mixed methods research was to assess the effectiveness of a functional

support group on the mood of clients with neurological impairments. An acquired brain injury

(ABI) is an insult to the brain that is not hereditary, congenital, or degenerative. An acquired brain injury encompasses all types of brain injuries (Biausa, 2022). The population included 16 clients with acquired brain injuries at The Resource Center through the Mental Health Association, recruited by use of convenience sampling. Data was collected through a researcher-developed 5-question survey utilizing face scales and open-ended questions. This survey, delivered once at the culmination of each session, allowed participants to reflect on their mood pre- and post-session to assess the effectiveness of the support group on the participant's mood. Results indicated participant mood before the group varied from week to week but consistently improved after the functional support group each week. Further research is recommended for implementing telehealth or utilizing adaptive technology during group sessions to increase accessibility further. In addition, occupational therapists (OTs) and OT students should advocate for awareness of functional support groups for their clients, especially in non–traditional settings.

Keywords: Neurological conditions, support group, brain injury, mood, occupational therapy, mental health

Introduction and Background

Introduction

The Western New England University (WNE) Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) student organization "*Inspired Minds*" began as a group that worked with survivors of traumatic

brain injuries (TBI) that have residual deficits in motor skills, social skills, and/or cognitive skills. It aimed to enhance quality of life through accessible crafting activities that promote creative thinking and nurture a sense of community. Within the facilitation of each creative activity, *Inspired Minds* was striving to address the client's cognitive skills such as planning, executive function, attention, and memory, which are all necessary components for functional living. The leaders of this group created a safe and fun environment where clients could connect, share their stories about their injuries, and share their creative abilities with each other.

Background

Occupational therapists identify strengths and limitations in the body systems and performance areas to create interventions including coping strategies, environmental adaptations, activity modifications, education plans, and lifestyle changes to promote successful engagement in meaningful activities during recovery (Harris, 2019). A study regarding clients with mild TBI reported more than 60% of individuals received no additional services following discharge (Seabury, 2018). Some interventions can include education for return to work, leisure, social activities, fatigue management, relaxation strategies, sleep hygiene, physical environment adaptations, and psychosocial and mental health functional support (CAOT, 2022).

Occupational therapists can complete a task analysis to help break down steps to activities and use restorative and compensatory strategies to improve recall (Wheeler et al., 2017). Compensatory techniques can include methods such as creating a daily schedule, teaching problem-solving strategies such as brainstorming solutions, setting up memory aids, and using a planner (Radomski et al, 2022).

Social support has been shown to improve quality of life and mental health (Pais et al., 2021). The article *Perceived Benefits of Peer Support Groups for Stroke Survivors and*

Caregivers in Rural North Carolina, explains how peer support groups play an important role in stroke recovery. These groups help with health coping strategies, reducing psychological stress, and creating an outlook for the survivors and their caregivers. Having social support can lead to better functional outcomes. Using open-ended questions with the focus groups enabled participants to engage in discussion about their experiences with the group (Christensen et al., 2019). A functional support group when compared to a traditional support group is often more task-oriented and skill-based and has been described as a stronger predictor of health. Functional support groups not only provide emotional support but also help to develop skills such as managing practical tasks and decision-making (Lozano-Hernández et al., 2023)

The driving force of this current project was to broaden *Inspired Minds'* reach to anyone with a cognitive or neurological condition in the greater Springfield community. Through surveys, this researcher collected qualitative and quantitative information about participant mood to see if the functional support groups were effective in improving mood. The information gained from this project was and will continue to be used to support the expansion of the *Inspired Minds* student organization at WNE. This will allow the organization to provide additional services to a population in need, while simultaneously affording students with more opportunities for hands-on experiential learning and engagement with clients. Research shows the benefits of incorporating occupational therapists into interdisciplinary teams for better identification of functional impairments and more comprehensive patient care (Harris et al., 2019). Support groups can help clients find coping strategies, reduce stress, and create a positive outlook for the participants and their caregivers. Research has also shown that participants view support groups as empowering and create a sense of community which was viewed as necessary for rehabilitation (Christensen, 2019).

The researcher began by identifying existing supports and needs for clients with cognitive and neurological conditions in the greater Springfield community to create a well-rounded support group. Once this needs assessment was completed, the researcher was able to collaborate with The Resource Center (TRC) through the Mental Health Association (MHA). This site helps individuals who are survivors of an acquired brain injury (ABI) or living with a disabling medical condition to live their best lives (MHA Inc., 2024). This collaboration allowed the researcher to run the *Inspired Minds* functional support groups with the participants at TRC for four consecutive weeks followed by post-session surveys that assessed both pre- and post-session participant mood.

Theoretical Frameworks

The program followed the Health Belief Model. This is a behavioral change model that has six constructs. The six constructs are perceived susceptibility, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cue to barrier, cue to action, and self-efficacy. Using this model helps determine that a person's actions will depend on how they perceive the benefits and barriers associated with the health behavior (LaMorte, 2022). This program will also follow the Cognitive Orientation to Daily Occupational Performance model (CO-OP). This includes the "goal-plan-do-check" strategy (Radomski, 2022). The goal should be driven by the client in collaboration with the therapist. This will result in more meaningful goals that are intrinsically motivating. The planning portion will help the client to identify strategies on how to accomplish the goals. The client will follow their plan and perform the tasks while communicating with the therapist. The client will then need to collaborate with the therapist to assess if they were successful in following their plan. Successful plans can increase confidence (Barros, 2023).

Program Evaluation & Design: Logic Model

During the planning phases of the project, this doctoral project used the logic model to help evaluate and design. The Logic model outlines the relationship between the resources invested, the activities planned, and the changes or results expected. The model helps in planning, implementing, evaluating, and communicating the impact of a project (CDC, 2018). This model was beneficial because it allowed the researcher to add structure to their plan. This model assists the researcher in accomplishing short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. Through evidence-based interventions focused on increasing life and social skills, participants experienced improved mood and Increased social support as determined by observation and surveys after each session.

Figure 1

The Logic Model was used to help evaluate and design this project.
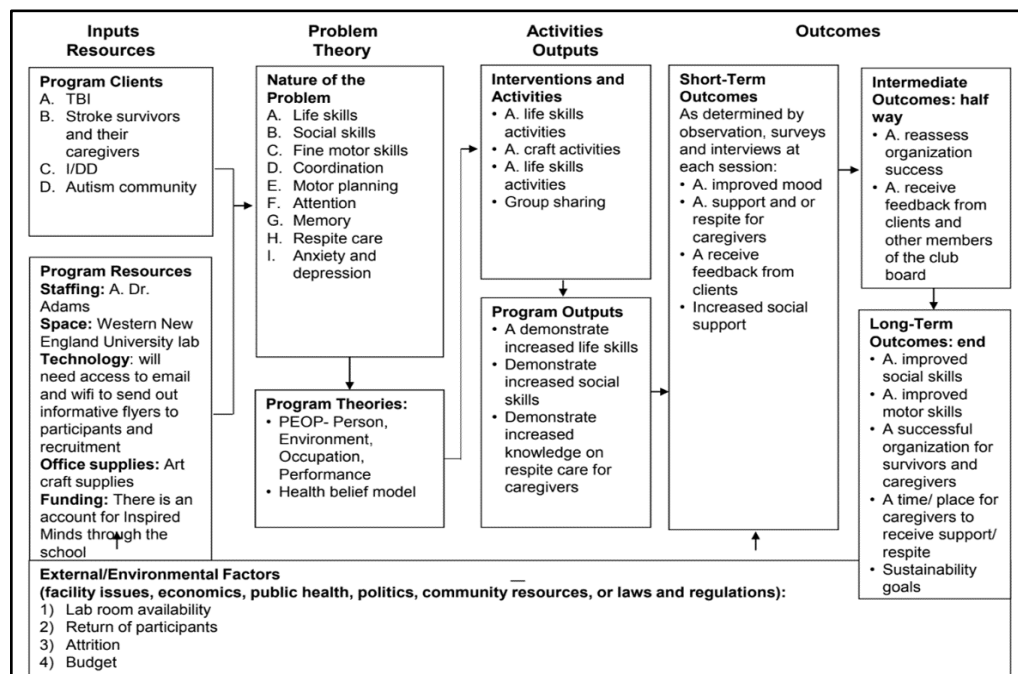
Doctoral Experiential Project Overview

Methods

The following sections detail the research process and methodology, describing how the partnership with MHA facilitated the project's development, data collection, and the analysis of evaluating the impact of the support group. The researcher then planned and held 4 functional support group sessions for 4 weeks consecutively with the participants at MHA and collected qualitative and quantitative information from surveys to see if the research and program were effective in improving the mood of participants. The research design of this study utilized mixed methods with descriptive analysis of data and open-ended questions which were coded and organized to themes. The population included 16 clients with neurological conditions at The Resource Center through the Mental Health Association recruited by use of convenience sampling. Data collection was done through online surveys on Google Forms reflecting on mood before and post-session to assess the effectiveness of the support group on the participant's mood. The survey was a researcher-developed 5 question survey utilizing face scales and open-ended questions. Face scales have an advantage in that they do not require respondents to read or understand verbal text scales and can be helpful for individuals with cognitive deficits related to comprehension (Stange et al., 2016). The survey was created intentionally keeping the population in mind and not knowing the cognitive abilities of each participant. The survey was distributed at the end of each session rather than a pre- and post-session model of distribution so as not to disrupt the flow of the session and to best manage time to allot sufficient time to complete the functional activity during the support group.

Experiential and Scholarly Components

The Doctoral Experiential Capstone project involves the implementation of the proposed experiential research project and the production and dissemination of a scholarly report on the findings. Once partnered with MHA, the project became clear and linear. The researcher spent

time observing at MHA, building rapport with participants, and seeing how their organization operates. During the first functional support group week, the participants created sensory bottles by filling clear containers with various materials that create visual and tactile stimulation when shaken or turned. They are often used as a therapeutic tool to help with sensory processing, stress relief, and focus (Oswald, 2022). Some materials required for this activity included bottles, glitter, stickers, sharpies, water, food coloring, and scissors. In the second week, the participants created vision boards. These can be used as tools to help individuals visualize and work toward their goals, aspirations, emotional expression, and desired outcomes (Davis, 2023). In the third week, participants created hanging plants. Research shows gardening has benefits such as stress reduction, sense of accomplishment, mindfulness, and physical benefitsPanțiru et al., 2024). In the fourth week, participants painted masks with colors correlating with their emotions. The mission of *Unmasking Brain Injury* is to promote awareness of brain injuries and to give survivors a voice through art to educate others about what it's like to live with a brain injury (Unmaskingbraininjury, 2021). In addition to the skills noted, each week the support group focused on mood-boosting activities such as fostering social interaction, encouraging participants to share their final products and experiences, and incorporating reflections to enhance emotional well-being. Each session was 1 hour, once a week, for four consecutive weeks. The scholarly component of this project included a study approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix A: IRB Approval Form). The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic coding to identify and label themes and patterns. The quantitative data was analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics and frequency distribution through a simple pre/post-column bar graph.

Results, Discussion, and Recommendations

Results

As previously stated, the purpose of this research was to obtain quantitative and qualitative data regarding the mood of the participants pre- and post-session over four consecutive weeks. There were a total of 31 responses from 16 participants all over 18 years of age. The participants' moods varied before the support group each week, but they consistently improved after the sessions. During week 1, the data shows that mood increased by 1.23 points from pre- to post-session. During week 2, the data shows that mood increased by .2 points from pre- to post-session. During week 3, the data shows that mood increased by .86 points from pre- to post-session. Finally, during week 4 the data shows that mood increased .4 points from pre to post session. Figure 2 displays the results of each participant's mood before and after each session for four consecutive weeks. However, on the weeks that the point increase seems small, it is important to note that the participants began the sessions already in a relatively good mood so there wasn't much room for movement increase. On average, participants' moods increased by .67 data points over four consecutive weeks.

Regarding the qualitative data, the researcher entered the coded themes found from the open-ended questions in the survey in a word cloud. A word cloud works by making words that are used more often bigger than those used less often. The top three words used were happy, good, and excited. Figure 3 displays the coded themes found from the open-ended questions in the survey regarding participant's moods. All responses were then entered into the word cloud for a visual representation of qualitative responses.

Figure 2

Participant mood before and after each session for four consecutive weeks.
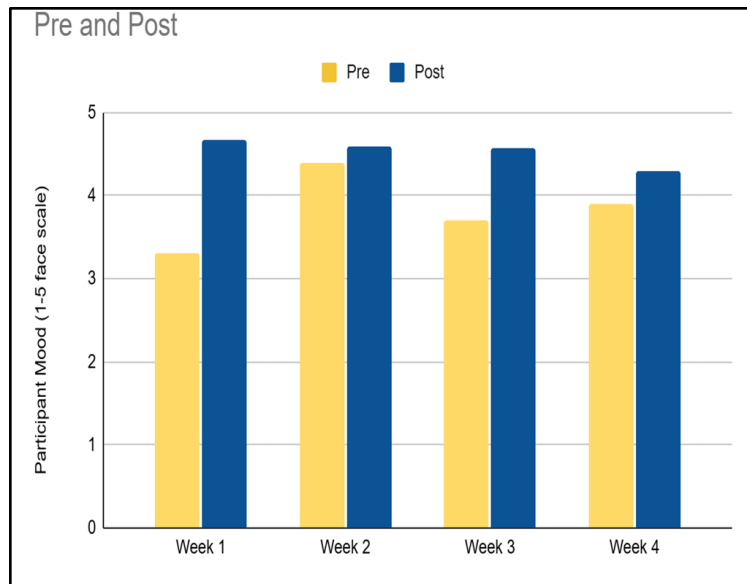
Figure 3

Word cloud displaying participant's moods.

Generate word cloud. *Free Word Cloud Generator.* (2024).

https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com/generatewordcloud

Strengths

When evaluating the program, there were both strengths and limitations. Speaking on the strengths first, by collaborating with MHA, *Inspired Minds* was able to share resources such as

accessible meeting spaces, researcher-developed educational materials such as the Wellness Toolkit, and administrative support (See Appendix D: Wellness ToolKit). The support group provided participants with tools and resources and was open to anyone with a neurological condition. An *Inspired Minds* student organization manual was created for future students to reference to ensure the roles and duties of the executive board and operations were clear (See Appendix B: Inspired Minds Student Manual). This program provided professional development opportunities and allowed for further services to be provided to a population in need, while simultaneously affording students with more opportunities for hands-on experiential learning and engagement with clients. Member feedback from each session was incorporated to continuously improve the sessions. This researcher also had the opportunity to speak at the WNE Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) chapter meeting which helped to promote awareness of the organization. Overall, the program's strengths contributed to its success, providing valuable resources and experiences for participants and student volunteers.

Limitations

Limitations of the program could impact the program's overall effectiveness and sustainability. One limitation of the program included a lack of anonymity with the surveys. This was due to some participants requiring assistance navigating the iPads. Another limitation included a potential lack of carryover with group protocols. While a few consistent students were assisting with running the group, not having the same student volunteers can cause a lack of rapport or carryover with group members and protocols. Because of the new location of the groups, *Inspired Minds* may not be able to continue with the previous participants from before this study which is something to consider for the future student organizations are granted a budget for each year but funding and resources may still be a barrier. One aspect this program

did not provide was support for the caregivers which is essential to prevent caregiver burnout. While the program had limitations including challenges with survey anonymity, inconsistent student volunteers, and a lack of caregiver support, these concerns provide important areas for future improvement and adaptation.

Recommendations

The implications of the study were explored highlighting the benefits of the support group, the importance of caregiver involvement, and the potential role of OT's and other health care practitioners in facilitating accessible and comprehensive support services. One implication for this target population is that involvement in functional support groups can provide participants with tools, and resources, and help to improve mood. Another implication is the promotion of engagement in socialization and having a sharing aspect in group sessions is beneficial for improving mood by giving participants a voice. An implication for occupational therapists or other practitioners is to incorporate the caregivers in the support group to prevent burnout and improve mental health in caregivers. Other OTs and practitioners should implement telehealth or utilize adaptive technology during group sessions to increase accessibility further. Occupational Therapists and OT students should advocate for awareness of functional support groups for their clients, especially in non–traditional settings. Other healthcare professionals can use the student manual and guidelines provided to create a support group for other populations and this can be done Interprofessionally to provide comprehensive care. Occupational therapists can offer these services in a nontraditional setting to help clients. Occupational therapists can be beneficial for identifying strategies such as environmental adaptations and activity modifications to promote successful engagement in meaningful activities. Overall this researcher was able to identify that functional support groups are effective in improving mood in patients with

neurological conditions. It can be assumed that participants who have an ABI are eager to participate in support group activities but might not have access to them.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

The following section discusses four final learning objectives focused on the student's personal and professional growth throughout this project.

Learning Objective 1: The student will recognize and be able to describe the diverse systems of service delivery that are most cost-effective and considerate for health, social, and educational settings, both traditional and nontraditional. through both clinical and reflective writing, be able to articulate a sensitivity to cultural, linguistic, and other diversities and describe solutions for care disparities.

As evidence of accomplishment for this objective, the student created physical documents such as surveys, recruitment emails, documents reviewed by their DEx mentor. In the reflections completed after each session the student used language that is sensitive to cultural, linguistic, and other diversities. The student also reflects on how participants are getting free OT through the support group. In the group protocol there is a list of ways to adapt each activity for each group (See Appendix C: Group Protocol).

Learning Objective 2: Document the ability to work with others to identify meaningful objectives, organize, manage, and motivate people and resources, communicate effectively, and supervise action to accomplish stated program or service goals.

As evidence of accomplishment for this objective, the student completed reflections of an assessment on how the session went from pre session through post session and the collaboration with The Mental Health Association of West Springfield. During the group sessions, the student was able to lead the other student volunteers and delegate duties. The mentor evaluated the performance of this objective as accomplished.

Learning Objective 3: Through both clinical and reflective writing, be able to articulate the therapeutic/clinical reasoning (procedural, interactive, narrative, ethical, scientific, pragmatic) process that is used during planning, delivery, and evaluation of population-based and evidence-driven occupational therapy services. demonstrate the ability to implement, in existing programs, and plan for in developing programs, an occupational therapy process that is occupation based, client centered, culturally sensitive, and ethically appropriate.

As evidence of accomplishment, the student created a Group Protocol Treatment Plan which included sections such as the frame of reference, purpose, benefits, adaptations, group goals, outcome criteria, method and more. Through this, the student was able to articulate the clinical procedural reasoning process that is used during the planning, delivery, and evaluation of population-based and evidence-driven occupational therapy services.

Learning Objective 4: The student will be able to effectively disseminate information learned from the DEx experience to peer OTD students interested in Inspired Minds to support sustainability of the organization.

As evidence of accomplishment for this objective, the student presented a final presentation to a review committee. The student was also able to Speak at a Student Occupational Therapy Association meeting regarding the project. Finally, the student conducted

a meeting with the executive board member students for *Inspired Minds* and seeked their

feedback.

Additional Information

A proposal has been submitted to Massachusetts Association for Occupational Therapy

and the American Occupational Therapy Association for dissemination at conferences.

To access the student's e-portfolio please use this link:

https://sites.google.com/view/mollys-dex-portfolio/home

Appendices

Please find additional important information related to this project in the following appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval Form

Appendix B: Inspired Minds Student Manual

Appendix C: Group Protocol

Appendix D: Wellness ToolKit

Appendix A: IRB Approval Form

WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY | WNE
COLLEGE of PHARMACY and HEALTH SCIENCES

Subgroup of the IRB & Human Subjects Committee

FWA00010736 Approval Form

Responsible Director: _____Dr. Levine _____

Title: The Inspired Minds Expansion: The Effectiveness of a Functional Support Group

on the Mood of Clients with Cognitive and Neurological Impairments

College Proposal Number: ___COP-IRB#230

_X____ This research proposal is exempt under Federal Regulation _____45 CFR

46.104.d.2.i

It is deemed acceptable according to the Belmont Principles and the American

Psychological Association's Ethical Guidelines for the Use of Human Participants for a

period of one year.*

_____ This research proposal has undergone an expedited review under Federal

Regulation _____. It is deemed acceptable according to the Belmont

Principles and the American Psychological Association's Ethical Guidelines for the Use

of Human Participants for a period of one year.*

_____ This research does not qualify for exemption or expedited review and will need to

be reviewed by the entire board.

Signature__

_____ _Menna Lune_ _____Date_____5/9/2024_____

Renewal requests due before ___5/9/2025_____

& Note: Authority to approve exempt or expedited research originating within the College of Pharmacy.

* Note: It is your responsibility to notify the IRB of any adverse events that occur during your research.

You must also request an additional review before you introduce changes to the proposed protocol.

Maintain a copy of your original application, any requested changes, and this signed approval form. You

will need to submit these if you apply for a renewal

Appendix B: Inspired Minds Student Manual

Inspired Minds Student Organization Manual

Created by: Molly Manning, OT/s 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction:

This handbook for the student organization Inspired Minds, serves as a guide with information for the Doctor of Occupational Therapy students at Western New England University. The program will follow the health belief model. This is a behavioral change model that has six constructs such as perceived susceptibility, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cue to barrier, cue to action, and self-efficacy. This model believes that one's course of action will depend on their perceptions of benefits and barriers related to health behavior (LaMorte, 2022).

Mission Statement

The mission of Inspired Minds is to enhance the quality of life of individuals with neurological conditions through accessible crafting activities that promote creative thinking and nurture a sense of community. Within the facilitation of each creative activity, Inspired Minds strives to improve and enhance the client's cognition skills such as planning, executive function, attention, and memory, which are all required for functional living. In this functional support group, we strive to offer unwavering support, valuable resources, and a safe space for sharing experiences and insights.

Overview of Obligations of Officers

As a Pharmacy Student Governance Association (PSGA)-recognized student organization or club within the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, select officers within the organization or club have specific, non transferrable obligations which are requirements of the office.

-Co- Presidents (or equivalent title)
- o Responsible for maintaining organizational compliance with all College and University requirements
- o One of two students authorized to sign for withdrawals from the organization's or club's University account

- Secretary (or equivalent title)
- o Responsible for maintaining a complete and accurate roll of all active members of the organization, producible upon a request from the Office of Student Affairs

- Treasurer (or equivalent title)
- o Responsible for maintaining the finances of the organization or club, including all financial paperwork
- o Upon request from the Office of Student Affairs, produce financial paperwork and assist the Office of Student Affairs in its conduct of an audit of organizational finances
- o One of two students authorized to sign for withdrawals from the organization's or club's University account

- Lead Faculty Adviser
- o Assist in the development of the organization or club, giving direction and providing guidance when needed and serving as a resource and point of reference
- o Advocate upon behalf of the organization or club with the College, the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the PSGA faculty advisers
- o Countersign all organizational expenses requiring withdrawals from the organization's or club's University account
  - ▪ May authorize the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs to countersign for organizational expenses at times

Inspired Minds Executive Board Obligations of Officers

As a Pharmacy Student Governance Association (PSGA)-recognized student organization or club within the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, select officers within the organization or club have specific, non transferrable obligations which are requirements of the office. The Inspired Minds Executive board consists of two Co- Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer. The responsibilities of the Inspired Minds Executive Board include running meetings, advocating for the student body as necessary by service and liaison between students and faculty.

The Co-Presidents duties include:
    a. Preside over all Inspired Minds Executive Board and lead Inspired Minds General Membership meetings.
    b. Give administrative guidance and direction to the structure and programming of the organization.
    c. Enforce the Inspired Minds Handbook and all other governing documents.
    d. Attend all Inspired Minds events and meetings.
    e. Be official spokesperson and representative for Inspired Minds in attendance of official functions.
    f. Act as a liaison between students, faculty, and administration.
    g. Maintain a file of administrative materials to be passed on to the succeeding President.
    h. Organize the transition of officers meeting for all entities of Inspired Minds prior to the end of the academic year.
    i. Establish annual goals with input from the other members of the Executive Board.
    j. Motivate and reward Inspired Minds General Members for participation and involvement.

The Secretary's duties include:
    a. Notify the necessary parties of all Inspired Minds Executive Board or Inspired Minds General Membership Meetings.
    b. Submit meeting Minutes for Inspired Minds Executive Board and General Membership meetings.
    c. Update the Inspired Minds calendar on the Bulletin Board.
    d. Maintain and update the Inspired Minds Handbook as necessary.
    e. Maintain and archive all Inspired Minds yearly events.
    f. Perform any other duties as delegated by the Co- Presidents or Faculty Advisor.
    g. Compose agendas for Executive Board and General Member meetings.
    h. Attends all Inspired Minds meetings and events.
    i. Counts and records votes.
    j. Takes attendance at meetings and events.

The Treasurer's duties include:

      a. Monitor all budget requests.
      b. In the absence of a fundraising chair, execute and organize or delegate fundraising events for Inspired Minds.
      c. Deposit and disburse all funds in a timely manner.
      d. Maintain records of the Inspired Minds budget.
      e. Perform any other duties assigned by the Co- Presidents or Faculty Advisor.
      f. Adheres to financial regulations and guidelines of the academic program.
      g. Attend all Inspired Minds meetings and events.

What is presented above is the minimal expectations of the listed officers. Any additional responsibilities for the above officers, plus responsibilities for all other officer positions, are as assigned by the organization or club itself and/or the PSGA.

The organization or club must provide the Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs a list of all executive officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer or equivalent) at the beginning of each academic year, and following any executive officer changes within the academic year. Honor Societies (examples: Phi Lambda Sigma, Rho Chi) are allowed to have a single individual hold the office of secretary/treasurer.

Faculty Advisor Role

- The faculty advisor should be an Occupational Therapist in academia
- Length of term- 2 years
- Advisor is encouraged to attend each event as a resource for the students

Procedures to Elect Inspired Minds Executive Board and Representatives

All student board positions will be open for election each academic year. Students interested in holding a board position are able to self-nominate for the position or be nominated by a peer/faculty advisor. Elections will be held in the beginning of the spring semester to allow for a training process to occur.

1. The Inspired Minds members will annually elect Co- Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer.
2. Only students who held a position in the prior year will be able to run for President.
3. Some positions are designated to students of a specific status. Below is the list:
    a. Second-Year Officer Positions
        1. Co-Presidents
    b. First-Year or Second -Year Officer Positions
        1. Treasurer
        2. Secretary
1. Inform all members of the officer roles and responsibilities of vacant positions prior to the election.
2. Any interested student can be elected to be the Secretary.
3. Any interested student can be elected to be the Treasurer.

4. The Co-President MUST be a second year student who has been a member of the executive board the prior year. In the event that this is not possible, the position is open to any second-year student.
5. Hold the elections at an Inspired Minds meeting.
6. Arrange for the candidates to speak in front of members (i.e., why they are interested in the position, their experience related to the position, why they are well suited for the position, and their ideas for future Inspired Minds activities and advancement). There will be a time limit of 3 minutes per speech.
7. All votes are submitted anonymously.
8. The counting of votes should be conducted under the supervision of the Faculty Inspired Minds Advisor. Candidates for the election will not be involved.
9. Once the results of the elections are announced, all incoming officers will review the Inspired Minds Handbook and have an opportunity to meet with the outgoing officers to review their roles and responsibilities
10. After the new Leadership Team is established, introductions and year planning should commence as soon as possible. A meeting should be organized by the newly elected Co-Presidents to discuss the Inspired Minds mission statement, begin to outline the goals and priorities for the upcoming year, and start planning activities for the upcoming year. It is also recommended that the incoming Leadership Team hold a social team building event, such as a retreat, to get to know each other.
11. Conducting the Election (Timeline and Guidelines)
    a. September: Introduction and nomination of the position of Executive Board members and announce election results in summary email.
    b. October: Begin training of new officers
    c. February: Introduction of positions to replace outgoing officers: Secretary, Treasurer, and any 'as needed' positions.
    d. April/May: New officers completely assume responsibilities and lead the last monthly Inspired Minds meeting of the semester.

Membership Eligibility Criteria

- Students must be an occupational therapy student enrolled in a Masters or Doctoral program
- Students must be in good academic and professional standing

Room scheduling (If unable to hold a session at The Recreation Center with the Mental Health Association)

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu.

Storage Space

Inspired Minds has a drawer in the cabinet in the OT workspace (230 G) located on the second floor of the Blake Law building.

Finances

The Inspired Minds Treasurer is responsible for overseeing all budgeting needs. Our budgeting priorities include:
1. Inspired Minds activities not covered by faculty-provided funds.
2. Support of important causes

Student Group Funding from the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Each September, travel funding will be dispersed by the Office of Student Affairs to all PSGA and SOTA Student Organizations. Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Group University Account -

Account number: 50-1-61010032-00-209000

Each PSGA-recognized organization or club is eligible to have a University controlled account. This account is maintained by the University's Student Administrative Services (SAS) and Controller's Office; a bank (with a teller) is located in the SAS offices located on the ground floor of the building that houses the D'Amour Library.

Each student organization or club maintains its own account, identifiable by a unique 19-digit number.

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Making Purchases

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

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Sales Tax

As a non-profit institution, the University is exempt from state sales taxes; this exemption extends to all PSGA-recognized student organizations or clubs, so long as the purchase of tangible personal property or services by the organization or club are used in the conduct or the

business of the student organization or club. Copies of the paperwork demonstrating the tax-exempt status of the University in Massachusetts and Connecticut are included in the Appendix.

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Tipping / gratuities

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

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Travel reimbursement

Students may be eligible for partial or full reimbursement from student organizations or clubs, the Office of Student Affairs, or the PSGA Career Development Fund for expenditures related to travel to/from local, regional, or national professional meetings, workshops, and seminars.

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Promotional Posters

Student organizations and clubs may utilize promotional posters to advertise an upcoming event (fundraising activity, meeting, guest speaker, etc.).

For posters to be hung on campus (outside of the CSP), off campus, distributed electronically, or for distribution to an audience other than College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences students, faculty, and staff:
Posters require approval of the University's Marketing and External Affairs Department. Contact: Matt Reilly, Technical Director at matthew.reilly@wne.edu or ext. 1541.

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Bulletin Boards

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Event Planning (Prepared by the Office of the Dean)

Policy Overview
The faculty, staff, administration, and students of the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and the associated various student organizations engage in a variety of activities, both on and off campus. These events are a valuable part of our program, but often require various resources and space considerations as well as including varying levels of liability risk. After-the-fact they also represent a unique opportunity to promote the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, which is consistent with our collective discussions that we can and should do everything we can to market the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences for the purposes of student, preceptor, and faculty recruitment.

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Hazing policy

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

Audits

Student organization and club finances and membership rolls are subject to periodic audit by the Office of Student Affairs.

Please refer to the Western New England University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences 2021-2022 Student Group Manual for Student Group Officers and Faculty Advisers or contact Dean Burton at amy.burton@wne.edu for further questions.

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Appendix C: Group Protocol

Group Protocol Treatment Plan

Group Title: "Sensory Bottles"

Author: Molly Manning OT/s

Frame(s) of Reference:

Dr. A. Jean Ayres' Theory for Sensory Integration

Time and Place of Meeting: TRC on Wednesday at 1-2 pm

Supplies and Cost:

- · Bottles $12
- · Orbeez $12
- · Glitter $1
- · Ribbons $1
- · Stickers $1
- · Googly eyes $1
- · Sharpies $2
- · Water $0
- · Food coloring $2
- · Scissors $5

How items will be obtained:

Items will be bought by the facilitator from local community stores, dollar stores, and from home

and the facilitator will bring all supplies needed.

Purpose/Description:

Sensory bottles come in all shapes, sizes and materials. The ones we will be making in this session can include water, orbeez, glitter, ribbons, stickers, googly eyes, and food coloring. Sensory bottles encourage sensory modulation strategies through the use of play and crafts. The purpose of the activity is to facilitate self-awareness, and self-shaping: Exploring, planning, and practicing, self-regulation and positive change, and repertoire expansion (Champagne 2011, pgs. 126-128). Sensory bottles can help to bring awareness to how our senses make us feel, identify possible noxious stimuli or overstimulation triggers, provide insight for future interventions with the client/s, provide a respectful and open-minded group activity, and provide a visual cue tool for relaxation and self-regulation.

Benefits of Sensory Modulation Strategies:
• Increase self-awareness
• Increase ability to self-nurture
• Increase resilience
• Increase self-esteem and body image
• Increase ability to engage in therapeutic activities
• Increase ability to engage in self-care activities
• Increase ability to engage in meaningful life roles
• Increase ability to engage in social activities
• Increase ability to cope with triggers
• Increase ability to rest and sleep
(Champagne, 2011. pg. 99)

Setting ground rules- Whatever happens in the group stay in the group, judgment-free zone, listen actively to others in the group, keep side chatter to a minimum, step up, step back, and be present (2 minutes)

Expectations and goals- Increase self-awareness, increase self-esteem, increase the ability to engage in therapeutic activities, increase the ability to engage in self-care activities, increase the ability to engage in social activities, and increase the ability to cope with triggers. (2 minutes)

Warm-up: Getting to know your senses/ what are the senses (3 minutes)

Creating a sensory bottle- (15 minutes)

Wrapping up and debrief/ Clean-up/ review summarize and share (10 minutes)

Population/Group Membership and Size:

Population: neurocognitive diagnoses, Sensory processing disorder, ADHD, Anxiety, Autism, ODD, I/DD etc.

~10 participants

Adaptations: some limitations to my group are they have sensory processing disorder. I must be careful not to over or under-stimulate and to focus on the just-right challenge.

Upgrades and Downgrades:

1.   Upgrade- Write words of affirmation on the outside of the bottle/ things they are grateful for

2.   Upgrade- actively practice breathing exercises with the bottle after the bottle has been created

3.   Downgrade- have the facilitator create the bottle for you/ have a premade sensory bottle

4.   Downgrade – start with just adding one color or one item to avoid overstimulation

Group Goals:

1.   LTG: Participants will increase their ability to engage in therapeutic activities

2.   STG: Participants will increase their ability to engage in social activities by sharing their bottles with the group

3.   STG: Participants will Increase self-awareness by thinking about their preferred and nonpreferred senses

4.   STG: Participants will increase their ability to maintain focused attention while listening to others in the group share

Outcome Criteria:

Introduction: I will begin by introducing myself, my title, why I am there, and the name of the group. I will also share what the activity is that we will be doing and why. Next, there will be a warm-up called "Getting to Know Your Senses". This will give me an idea of the receptivity of the group. This warm-up will prepare them for the activity. I will set the mood with some relaxing music and then explain the expectations, goals, and ground rules for the group. There will be an agenda of the group session with the estimated timing of each section. Next will be the activity. We will be filling the water bottles to an appropriate level, and I will be giving loose directions to allow for creativity and the design of unique bottles. This will be about one-third of the session for about 15 minutes. If needed adaptations to the activities will be provided. Next

will be the sharing portion. If comfortable, everyone will share their bottle with the group and explained why they designed it the way they did. Next will be the processing step. I will ask the participants how they felt about the activity and share 1 thing that they learned about themselves or others in the group. They can also share similarities and differences in the bottles and each other's sensory thresholds. After that will be the generalization step. I will explain that Everyone is different in the way we respond to stimuli. I will point out the similarities and differences I noticed during the session to bring awareness to those principles. Next, is the application step. I will help the group to understand how what we have done and learned during the session can be applied to everyday life. I will bring awareness to how our senses make us feel and how our senses stimulate us. I will help the group recognize the effect that stress can have on our bodies and can help prepare us to manage everyday stressors. I will ask questions such as How can you use this bottle next time you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed? Or what situations can you use this bottle? (Class, work, homework, leisure)? Finally, is the summary. I will review the goals, content, and purpose of the activity again. I will thank all of the members for participating to acknowledge their emotions and give verbal recognition. Participants will practice planning and organization skills in this group. They will learn strategies to regulate emotions. Participants will communicate and share items with others in the group. As an outcome, participants will become aware of how our senses make us feel and identify potential triggers in a safe environment. This activity will bring awareness to how our senses make us feel and how our senses stimulate us. We will be able to recognize the effect that stress can have on our body and can help prepare us to manage everyday stressors. We will have a better understanding of how everyone is different in the way we respond to stimuli.

Method:

The therapeutic approach I will use is the sensorimotor approach. The primary goal of this approach has been used with developmental disabilities affecting the central nervous system (Cole, 2018). I will be following Ayres' Sensory Integration. Sensory integration focuses on ways to improve functional skills within the context of play learning and social interaction. Ayres proposed playful interventions to engage the child's inner drive to learn and develop (Cole, 2018). As the therapist, I will begin by facilitating discussions and sharing with the group about our senses. I will then take on the role of encourager, harmonizer, and initiator-contributor. I want to emphasize that each bottle should be unique so the directions will be loosely explained to allow for creativity. Ayres' Sensory Integration is the process of the brain's ability to organize sensory information for use. This theory focuses on the sensory systems such as visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile, and olfactory. According to *Children With Disturbances in Sensory Processing: A Pilot Study Examining the Role of the Parasympathetic Nervous System,* "...the capacity to regulate and organize the degree, intensity, and nature of responses to sensory input in a graded and adaptive manner. This allows the individual to achieve and maintain an optimal range of performance and to adapt to challenges in daily life" (Miller, Reisman, Mcintosh & Simon, 2001. pg57).

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Appendix D: Wellness ToolKit

Please follow the link below to access the Wellness Toolkit.

file:///C:/Users/SecureTest/Downloads/Wellness%20tool%20kit%20(1).pdf

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