Community Paper

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Community-based programs are a noteworthy niche that occupational therapy practitioners can offer clients and communities. This allows clients with diverse needs to develop skills, enhance social participation, and improve overall well-being to encourage inclusivity and diversity. The group intervention that I am developing in my community are modifications to a local festival that has served as a special part of the town’s history for over fifty-five years. Incorporating evaluation components around the interventions and outcome measures will highlight how occupational therapy principles can contribute to community-based interventions for individuals with physical, social or sensory impairments (Finlayson & Edwards, 1995).

To determine the effectiveness of the community-based program, the evaluator will use both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine the success of our program. The program centers around improving the quality of life, mental health, and participation of all individuals in the community. These measurements align with the Healthy People 2030 standards of increasing functional independence and inclusion ( <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/overall-health-and-well-being>).

The Outcome Goals and Measurements (Table One) for the Program that I chose to use for data collection are the Canadian Occupational Performance Model and a festivalgoer survey of their perceptions of the environmental modifications that are planned for the festival.

Table 1

*Outcome and Measurements*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Goal | Healthy People 2030 | Outcome Measure | Data Collection Method |
| To provide participants with access to a handicapped-accessible bathroom. | To create opportunities for inclusion | Canadian Occupational Performance Model  (COPM) | Pre/Post Survey |
| To provide canopies and spaces for people in wheelchairs and are sensitive to heat to be placed around the festival. | To create opportunities to improve health | Likert Scale Survey created from the festival committee that will gauge festivalgoers and users on their perceptions of the spaces. | Pre/Post Survey |
| Inclusive job opportunities for three persons identified by the WV Department of Rehabilitation | To create job opportunities for individuals with diverse needs. | COPM | Pre/Post survey of the COPM. |

The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) is a client-centered measure focusing on identifying and prioritizing areas of occupational performance in clients. The occupational measure is intended to be used at initial evaluation and discharge. The purpose of the tool is to detect changes in clients’ self-perceived occupational performance over time, rate clients’ priorities in occupational performance tasks, evaluate patients’ performance and satisfaction of the problem areas as well to provide goal setting opportunities for the client and therapist. (Law, et.al 2019). The benefits of using an outcome measure in therapeutic interventions are that they are designed specifically to capture change.

The impact that the COPM could have on goal selection and practice could positively impact my community project by actions of self-care, productivity and leisure could ensure that goal development would be meaningful, and client centered. Occupational therapists could request reimbursement from The Department of Rehabilitation for clients that need modifications for their job role. By ensuring that practices are evidence-based and measurable for goal development we ensure that our profession is promoting quality treatment approaches.

Likert scaled survey questionnaires are mappings from responses to simple statements that capture unobservable beliefs in a discrete scale that expresses both the direction and strength of preferences (Westland, 2022). The Likert scale survey given to festivalgoers will provide valuable feedback to the committee, helping us assess their perceptions of the environmental modifications and gather input through open-ended questions on additional modifications or accommodation needed to better meet their needs during the festival.

Implementation of the outcome measures will allow us to assess the impact of the program on participants occupational performance, quality of life and overall well-being. By using a combination of standardized assessments, self-reported feedback and a perception survey we can provide the committee with a comprehensive evaluation of the program and its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement and further modifications to best meet the needs of users of the program. Ultimately, our goal is to provide health outcomes as aligned with Healthy People 2030.

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