

Perception of Work or Community Participation by Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities following Planning for Autism Curriculum Implementation

Morgan Benefield - TWU OTD Student, Marilyn Carter – Administrator of Adult Services, Linda Barnett, OTD, MA, OTR

Background

Literature Review

The literature review completed displayed continued needs experienced by adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Less than 1/3 of adults with IDD are employed compared to those without (Thomas & Morgan, 2021). Deficits in areas of self-care, social skills, self-awareness, and self-advocacy, and others found to contribute to discrepancies (Anderson et al., 2021; Elksin & Elksin, 2001, as cited in Sung et al., 2019). Educational services and interventions shown to be beneficial, however limited implementation is commonly seen.



STARC of Louisiana, Inc. provides supported employment, day habilitation, vocational training, sheltered workshop, residential, and transportation services for adults with IDD.

Areas of Need

Clients:

- Deficits in self-care, self-awareness, social skills, self-advocacy

Agency:

- Resources and programming to improve client independence in work or community activities.

Methods

Project Purpose: To explore the effects of self-advocacy, self-care, and self-awareness skills on perceived work and community participation success by adults with IDD.

Goals

- To implement the *Promoting Community Participation for Autistic Learners* curriculum with a small-group of learners with IDD to improve their perceived work or community participation activities.
- For the student to improve confidence, communication, and problem solving by planning, facilitating, and evaluating the curriculum to make modifications as needed.

Program Details

- **Participants:** 8 adults with IDD
- **Frequency:** 30-minute sessions, 2x/week for 6 weeks
- **Material:** 24 lessons from the *Promoting Community Participation for Autistic Learners* curriculum developed by Kelly Wanzer, M.S., CCC/SLP and Tina Fletcher, EdD, MFA, OTR



Outcomes

Outcome measures

- Pre-test & post-test survey completed by participants
- Likert-scale survey following each session to assess participant engagement & enjoyment of material
- Reflection journal completed by student

Results

Results of the post-test survey completed by **8 participants** displayed below.

Topic	Responses
Better recognize needs	75% “yes”
Better plan for needs	100% “yes”
Better speak up for needs	87.5% “yes”
Beneficial to community or work participation	100% “yes”

Conclusions

- The program improved participants’ perception of work or community participation activities.
- Participants reported improved perception of ability to recognize, plan for, and speak up for their needs indicating improved self-care, self-awareness, and self-advocacy skills.

Recommendations

- Twice weekly for 6 weeks
- Large-group, small-group, or individual sessions
 - To prepare clients for community outings or employment placements
- Have staff review materials to further knowledge of how to promote community participation

Resources

- *Promoting Community Participation for Autistic Learners* curriculum
- Google folder with interactive PowerPoint to increase engagement, sample lesson plans, and dissemination flyer
 - <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MKbWZ6Hz1tsdU54KhbEFYwPQIX9vGtv?usp=sharing>



References

- Thomas, F., & Morgan, R. L. (2021). Evidence-based job retention interventions for people with disabilities: A narrative literature review. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 54(2), 89–101. <https://doi.org/10.3233/jvr-201122>
- Anderson, C., Butt, C., & Sarsony, C. (2021). Young adults on the autism spectrum and early employment-related experiences: Aspirations and obstacles. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 51(1), 88–105. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04513-4>
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/159fC8wtUyQTTsEtqVwpcfsatdI7clgK0kBL3DBDYyxk/edit?usp=sharing>

