

**Capstone Project Scholarly Paper**

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OT 6923: OT Doctoral Capstone Project

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April 28, 2024

## **Introduction**

For many professions, including occupational therapy, healthy aging and maintaining the quality of life among seniors are essential. As individuals age, addressing their needs/preferences is vital to ensure well-being and overall life satisfaction. With a holistic approach, occupational therapists can empower seniors to maintain their independence, participate in meaningful activities, and engage in fulfilling relationships. The occupation of health management addresses activities related to developing, managing, and maintaining health and wellness routines. According to the literature, occupation-based interventions related to health management are effective in improving occupational performance and quality of life in older adults (Berger et al., 2018). The primary aim of this capstone project was to design and implement a comprehensive health and wellness program tailored for older adults that focused on the occupation of health management. It encompassed activities that emphasized promoting social and emotional well-being, physical activity, and symptom and condition management for health conditions commonly encountered by residents.

## **Process**

The program implementation began with a thorough needs assessment, comprising of a comprehensive literature review and targeted site-specific assessment involving staff and residents of the capstone site. An occupational-based program was developed by researching existing programs at the capstone site and various senior living facilities to address the identified needs. The 10-week program was designed to enhance seniors' health management skills, focusing on physical activities for strength and endurance, community socials to foster social engagement, health education to promote knowledge and healthy practices, and fall prevention to

mitigate injury risks. Program evaluation included the completion of satisfaction surveys by participating residents. Deliverables included educational pamphlets, a workout video playlist, community speakers, and workshops that enhanced participants' understanding and skills in health management. Available resources, social support, and environmental barriers all impact a senior's ability to engage in activities promoting health and wellness. Due to the dynamic relationship between person, environment, and occupations, the Person- Environment- Occupation (PEO) Model was utilized in this program to modify the environment and provide resources to support seniors in their health and wellness journey.

### **Outcomes**

As stated above, a satisfaction survey was administered to residents before and after the program's delivery. Measurable outcomes included increased resident satisfaction with their ability to manage their health, fall prevention, and participation in activities that benefit individual health and wellness. These results offered evidence of the program's success in empowering seniors to take control of their health and advocate for themselves as it relates to health management. Also, the results show the role of occupational therapy in promoting wellness among older adults through the use of an occupation-based program. The implemented health and wellness program at the senior living facility created a culture that valued the importance of holistic care and well-being. The program allowed staff to participate in meaningful activities with residents and contribute to positive health outcomes. Program participants engaged in activities that promote health and wellness while also socializing with fellow community members, enabling them to live satisfying lives in their community. By educating individuals on techniques and activities that promote the occupation of health management, occupational therapists can empower participants to advocate for their needs and

wants. The student involved in this capstone project gained valuable insights into the role of occupational therapy in promoting holistic well-being among seniors through hands-on experience by implementing a health management program.

### **Conclusion**

Promoting healthy aging and preserving quality of life among seniors is essential. The implemented health and wellness program focused on the occupation of health management. Through a needs assessment, program development, and evaluation, the program successfully increased resident satisfaction and confidence in their ability to lead healthy lives. The deliverables provided increased knowledge and engagement in activities that contribute to the occupation of health management. It is important to understand how occupational therapists can support a seniors' health journey. The holistic approaches that are used in occupational therapy allow seniors to preserve independence, pursue meaningful activities, and experience fulfilling relationships.

## References

Berger, S., Escher, A., Mengle, E., & Sullivan, N. (2018). Effectiveness of health promotion, management, and maintenance interventions within the scope of occupational therapy for community-dwelling older adults: A systematic review. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 72(4). <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2018.030346>