

The Vision self-management project: A research-to-practice translation project

Tanya L. Packer^{1,2}, Margaret Crowley¹

¹Centre for Research into Disability and Society, Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, Australia, ²School of Occupational Therapy, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, ³Association for the Blind of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Introduction: The aging population will result in increased numbers of people with vision impairment. Occupational therapists must respond to this emerging area of practice. This paper reports the research and practice outcomes of an innovative collaborative project involving researchers and practitioners. The translational research project aimed to increase the evidence base underpinning vision rehabilitation services in a state-wide non-government agency.

Objectives: The specific project objectives were to 1) develop and test two new self-management protocols - Living Safe (a self-defense program) and Living Well for Caregivers; 2) to provide self-management professional development workshops for staff and 3) to translate the research evaluation framework into an ongoing practice based quality monitoring system.

Methods: Client self-efficacy, activity participation and mood were evaluated using a pre-test / post-test design. Caregiver outcomes included self-efficacy and mood. Using self-report, therapists rated their self-management competencies before and after participation in the professional development workshops. Managers rated the overall impact of the project on their agency using the Assessment of Chronic Illness Care tool. Depending on the sample size and normality of the data, parametric or non-parametric analysis were undertaken to examine change over time.

Results: Two new standardized and repeatable protocols, based on self-management principles were developed and efficacy studies undertaken. The self-defense self-management program was associated with statistically significant improvements in self-defense knowledge, participation, and three forms of self-efficacy: self-defence, activities and interpersonal efficacy ($n = 22$, $p > .001$). Statistically significant improvements ($p=0.05$) were also found on caregiver outcomes. Therapist ratings of their knowledge and competencies in chronic disease self-management demonstrated statistically significant differences for all seven items even after Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons. Therapists continue to monitor outcomes using the new monitoring system. Agency managers reported statistically significant improvements in the overall care provided by the agency.

Conclusion: The structured, whole of service approach led to improvements in service delivery as measured by improved client outcomes, therapist competencies and managers' assessment of quality of care.

Contribution to practice: Translation of research into practice is both possible and beneficial. Key aspects include inclusion and measurement of outcomes at client, therapist and managerial levels.