

PRESENTATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY GROUP PROGRAM IN A REHABILITATION AND AGED CARE SETTING: PROCESS & OUTCOMES

Karen Roberts, Lisa Cameron, Anna Gillies, Jane Lawrence
Caulfield Hospital, Alfred Health, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Occupational therapists regularly provide therapeutic intervention within a group context. The benefits of participation in a group process are recognized by the occupational therapy profession. These benefits include opportunities to share experiences, problem solving within a collaborative setting and facilitating change in behaviour. Within a rehabilitation and aged care setting, groups are frequently used to deliver intervention that addresses specific occupational performance component deficits and to provide opportunity to practice everyday occupations. Groups are also often considered as an efficient and time-effective method to provide intervention to a number of clients simultaneously. Despite the broad utility of groups, there is limited literature outlining processes to guide evaluation of an entire occupational therapy group program.

Objectives:

This paper presents

- (i) an overview of the process employed by one sub-acute occupational therapy department to comprehensively review their group program, and
- (ii) the outcome of changes implemented as a result of the group program review.

Description:

A comprehensive review was undertaken to determine the efficacy and utilization of groups offered within a sub-acute occupational therapy service in Melbourne, Australia. The review also aimed to determine patient and staff satisfaction with the existing group program.

Data was initially collected through an audit of group attendance and non-attendance over a two month period, patient interview, staff survey and medical record documentation audit. The results of this data collection informed a consensus process within the department. Staff addressed the areas of group protocols, orientation to facilitating groups and documentation of patient performance following group participation. Changes were made to existing practice and re-evaluated after six months.

Results / Discussion:

Initial data collection indicated that there was potential to reduce the number of referrals resulting in non-attendance, that some patients were unaware of the intended purpose of their referral to the group program and that documentation of group attendance and participation was not consistently completed.

Conclusion:

This paper will present the process used by one occupational therapy department to review their group program. It is anticipated that this presentation will be beneficial internationally for others who are considering evaluating their own group program.