

Community Engagement in Adult Training Facilities: Exploring Workplace Dynamics to Promote Client-Centered Practice

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INTRODUCTION

Background

- Pittsburgh Mercy Behavioral Health is an Adult Training Facility (ATF) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)
- Individuals with IDD are at higher risk of social isolation due to limited engagement in community settings^{1, 2}
- In 2016, Pennsylvania introduced Community Participation Support legislation (PA Title 55, Chapter 2380) mandating increased community engagement for clients in ATFs

Significance

- ATF staff report that community engagement is difficult to achieve due to limited resources (personnel, finances, access)³
- Community engagement can be facilitated by increasing staff proficiency in the following skill areas:
 - Activity adaptation¹
 - Communication¹
 - Program structure³
 - Standardized community outing protocol³
- Skill development can increase positive workplace culture that can lead to more efficient and beneficial community engagement opportunities³
- Workplace culture change takes time and requires a multimodal approach⁴

OBJECTIVES

- **Objective 1:** Promote meaningful participation for clients both in an ATF (Pittsburgh Mercy) and community
- **Objective 2:** Establish unified program structure and supportive workplace culture in an ATF (Pittsburgh Mercy)

PITTSBURGH MERCY

Location

- Pittsburgh Mercy Behavioral Health, Bloomfield site, Pittsburgh, PA

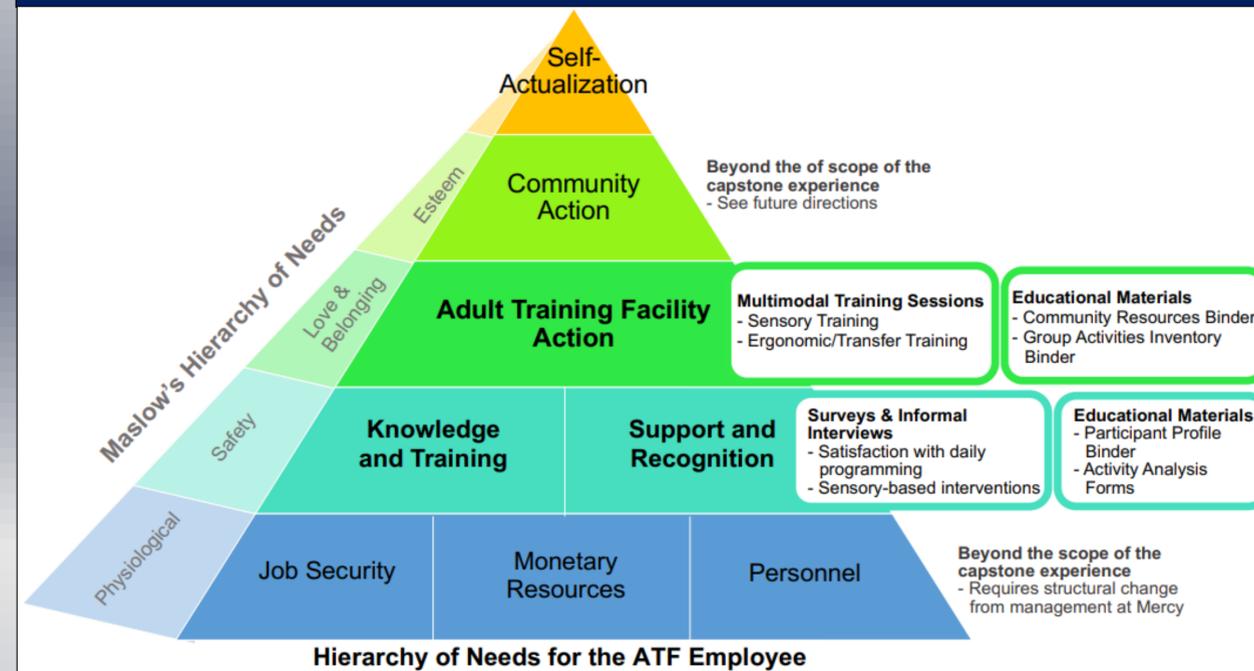
Staff

- 1 Supervising Manager
- 12 Direct Support Providers

Participants

- 38 (15 females, 23 males)

METHODS



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was adapted to identify the needs of the ATF staff (Pittsburgh Mercy) and areas of intervention.

RESULTS

Increased satisfaction

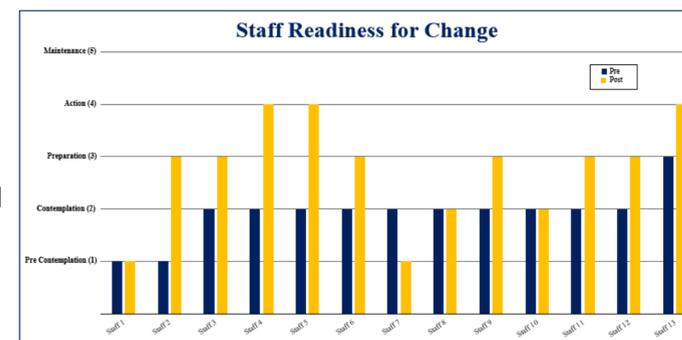
- 35 activities analyses created, trialed, and distributed
- 29 community connections established

Increased program structure

- Implemented additional group activity per day
- Implemented weekly staff meeting
- Implemented weekly problem-solving sessions

Increased readiness for change

- January 2020 pre-average: 1.9/5
- March 2020 post-average: 3/5
- Staff member breakdown:
 - 9/13 staff members increased
 - 3/13 remained the same
 - 1/13 decreased



DISCUSSION

Conclusion

- Therapeutic use of self is a powerful skill to guide change in workplace culture
- Understanding the Hierarchy of Needs for the ATF Employee can inform pragmatic program changes
- A multimodal approach to education is imperative for knowledge retention when educating on novel topics
- Both top-down and bottom-up approaches are necessary for system wide changes
 - All stakeholders must accept and contribute to organizational improvements
 - Recruiting both change champions and opinion leaders is vital to sustainability of program change

Challenges

- Factors that prevented further progress in this project included complacency with routine, resistance to change, organizational instability, and the COVID-19 pandemic

Future Directions

- Address foundational workplace needs (job security, monetary resources, and personnel) to support progression in the hierarchy of needs to community action and self actualization

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Occupational therapists' unique focus on roles, habits, routines, and values can be effective in analyzing the needs of stakeholders and facilitating organizational change.

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