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
- 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)
- Community engagement can be facilitated by increasing staff proficiency in the following skill areas:
  - Activity adaptation
  - Communication
  - Program structure
  - Standardized community outing protocol
- Skill development can increase positive workplace culture that can lead to more efficient and beneficial community engagement opportunities
- Workplace culture change takes time and requires a multimodal approach

Objective 1

- Promote meaningful participation for clients both in activity programming and activity availability

Objective 2

- Establish unified program structure and supportive workplace culture in an ATF (Pittsburgh Mercy)

Methods

- Increased satisfaction with activity programming and activity availability
  - 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

Results

- 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 can inform pragmatic program changes
- A multimodal approach to education is imperative for knowledge retention when educating on novel topics

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.

References


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