Background and Significance

- HEARTH, which stands for Homelessness Ends with Advocacy, Resources, Training, and Housing, assists families in achieving their goals by providing support services, safe and affordable transitional housing, and an atmosphere of strong mutual support.
- This non-profit depends on its volunteers to provide cost-effective childcare for its residents.
- HEARTH staff identified a strong need to improve the volunteer onboarding process. OT students in collaboration with HEARTH staff, created a screening tool and mixed-media training modules to enrich the childcare program and promote a more seamless onboarding process.

Purpose and Objectives

This poster describes the creation and implementation of a childcare volunteer training protocol for HEARTH. The listener will be able to:
- Distinguish the role of occupational therapy in community health promotion and volunteer management.
- Identify strategies to engage adult learners, which include the use of multiple forms of media, self-paced and flexible deadlines, and an incentive for personal growth and development.

Methods

Pre-Survey/Post-Survey: Distributed to gauge opinions on current volunteer services at HEARTH.

Volunteer Screening Tool: Created and implemented with aims to improve the quality of childcare services.

Volunteer Sustainability Resource: Established to ensure HEARTH’s efforts for selecting high quality volunteer candidates and training.

Volunteer Training Modules: Designed and built with pertinent topics to increase competency and better prepare future HEARTH volunteers via interactive and easily accessible website (see QR code in testimonial section).

Results

Although HEARTH staff reports having a consistent pool of childcare volunteers, when asked about quality of the childcare program, staff reported that they did not feel they were at or above the quality of childcare programs at similar non-profits in surveys pre-implementation of the screening tool and mixed-media training modules.

Following project implementation, staff continues to report a consistent pool of childcare volunteers. They also report an increased satisfaction with the overall quality of the childcare program.

Testimonials

What HEARTH staff is saying:
Morgan Cable, Volunteer Coordinator: ”I am very happy with the results...I really appreciated that you (Pitt students) offered both the PDFs and videos. I think the training really appeals to a variety of learning needs...”

What volunteers are saying:
"I didn't have an onboarding when I started at HEARTH...I am grateful for this!"
"I just finished the modules for volunteering in childcare. They are very well done...I work with small children and really valued the information about sensory processing and behavior. I think these are two areas that people might not know as much about that could really help during their time with the kids."

Discussion

- By conducting our project, we can conclude that our training modules positively impacted HEARTH's onboarding process for their volunteer childcare program.
- Our ultimate goals is for children at HEARTH to receive the best care.
- Mixed media modules are well-received by adult learners, as research suggested.

Implications for Future Practice

Due to the small sample size, future groups should seek out additional feedback from relevant stakeholders. Based on this feedback, the modules can be updated and adapted to other types of volunteers within HEARTH.

Future work should consider:

Creating Workshops
- For both volunteers and HEARTH residents

Debriefing Volunteers
- Interpreters discussions
- Following session to reinforce modules

Collecting Data from Post-surveys
- Determine which educational methods volunteers felt most beneficial to their learning.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the HEARTH staff and residents for their continuous support and patience with our team throughout the duration of this project. Thank you to Morgan Cable, Sangina Diaz-Garcia, Caitlin Reddinger, and Jenny Shahinian for their collaboration and communication throughout this process. Lastly, an enormous thank you to Dr. Jennifer S. White for her mentorship and expertise as we navigated new concepts in project development.

References