Enhancing Preparation for Community Re-Integration during Long-Term Psychiatric Hospitalization

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Introduction

The Transitional Recovery Unit (TRU) at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital (WPH) is an extended acute program that serves individuals with serious and chronic mental illness. An assessment conducted with TRU stakeholders revealed a need for:

- Measurement of community re-integration preparedness
- Enhancement of life skills programming

An evidence-based occupational therapy (OT) doctoral capstone project addressed these needs through the use of occupation-based assessment tools, evidence-based enhancement of life skills curricula, and staff training.

Objectives

1. Describe the value of occupational therapy in psychiatric rehabilitation by focusing on patient-identified goals to promote successful community re-integration.
2. Identify strategies for integrating humanistic occupation-based programming into psychiatric rehabilitation for individuals with chronic mental illnesses.

Methods

Holistic Discharge Preparation

- Person
  - Patients' Goals
- Occupation
  - Life Skills
- Environment
  - Staff
Identified patients' most important goals, rated performance and satisfaction through use of a semi-structured interview (Canadian Occupational Performance Measure, COPM)²

Educated staff on life skills curriculum to improve milieu long-term. Implemented pre- and post-surveys on staff confidence of life skills assistance and patient discharge readiness.

Implemented strategy training and life skills curriculum to promote generalization of skills for community life post-discharge. ³

Results

**Figure 1.** Significant improvement (p<.0016) in patients' self-rated performance in activities identified using the COPM, before and after OT life skills programming.

**Figure 2.** Significant improvement (p<.0011) in patients' self-rated satisfaction in activities identified using the COPM, before and after OT life skills programming.

**Figure 3.** Significant increase in overall number of groups facilitated on the unit by both staff and OT students increased significantly over time.

**Figure 4.** Significant increase in number of life skills groups completed. As OT students phased out, staff-led life skills groups continued to rise.

**Figure 5.** Significant increase (p=.046) in staff confidence levels in patients' discharge readiness related to self-care and life skills after project implementation.

Staff Confidence in Patient Discharge Readiness:

PRE: 5.88

POST: 8.20

Testimonies:

- **“These groups really help me let go of my worries and feel in the moment while I do things.”**
  - Patient on TRU

- **“The students have taken the time to be attentive to the various personalities of the patients and how that impacts the activities they do with them.”**
  - Staff Member

Discussion

**Findings**

- Significant increase (p<.001) in COPM performance and satisfaction scores supports that focused OT intervention on patient's identified goals can improve outcomes.
- Collaborative efforts with TRU staff on facilitation of life skill groups, motivational interviewing for ADL completion, and contribution to daily interprofessional meetings was associated with increased staff confidence in patient's readiness for discharge.

**Limitations**

- Short staffing limited carryover of group topics and group productivity
- Some patients already had high COPM pre-scores due to the initiation of the capstone project at the end of their length of stay
- Patient transfers to other units led to inability to assess post-scores for certain patients, limiting our sample size

**Recommendations**

- Continuation of individual goal identification
- Implementation of life skills curriculum on a consistent basis
- Establishment of a clinical OTR/L position to support ADLs and Life Skills Programming

Conclusion

Thank you to our UPMC WPH TRU site mentor and the entire WPH TRU staff team for their encouragement, support, and professional guidance, and a very special thank you to the patients on TRU who have come to know and love throughout our project. Every patient left a lasting impact on each of us, and we could not have done it without you.

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References