

Introduction

Background

- Citizen Care is a nonprofit serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in residential and community-based settings.
- Evidence shows OT improves independence, participation, and quality of life for individuals with ASD and IDD (Blaskowitz et al., 2018; Patten et al., 2024).
- Stakeholders identified a strong need for occupational therapy (OT), particularly to support daily living skills, community participation, and engagement in meaningful activities.
- In response, this project developed an Occupational Therapy Standard Operating Procedure Manual (OTSOPM) to provide evidence-based guidance and support sustainable OT integration.

Objectives

1. Increase understanding of the role of OT in enhancing participation in meaningful activities for individuals with ASD and IDD.
2. Identify resources and key considerations for implementing sustainable OT services within a community-based setting.

Methods

Disseminate Qualtrics Pre Survey to assess:

- Areas to prioritize OT services
- Adequacy of current OT resources
- Citizen Care's familiarity with OT services in community-based settings and readiness to hire an OT



Create and Distribute Occupational Therapy Standard Operating Procedures Manual that includes:

- OT's role at Citizen Care
- OT compensation & benefits
- Assessment, treatment, & screening tools
- OT documentation form
- Grant & funding sources



Disseminate Qualtrics Post Survey to assess:

- Adequacy of current OT resources following distribution of the OTSOPM
- Citizen Care's familiarity with OT services in community-based settings and readiness to hire an OT
- Effectiveness of the OTSOPM as a resource for guiding Citizen Care in implementing an OT department



Participants:

- The sample includes 41 participants: 49% administrative staff, 46% direct support professionals, and 5% who chose not to disclose their professional role.

Audience:

- Intended audience is administrative staff, as they are responsible for the logistical process involved in hiring, compensating, and establishing documentation for OT services.

Participants:

- The sample includes 6 participants; 100% administrative staff.
- Survey is administered exclusively to administrative staff who will use the OTSOPM in hiring an OT.

Discussion

Conclusion

- Citizen Care's administrative staff demonstrated increased familiarity with OT services and increased readiness to hire an OT after reviewing the OTSOPM.
- The OTSOPM contributed to enhanced knowledge of OT services, informed decision-making, and advanced progress towards establishing OT services within Citizen Care.

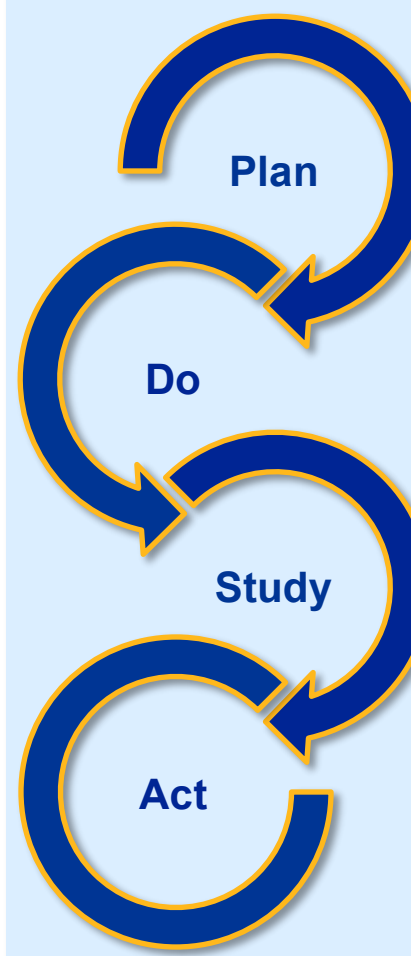
Limitations

- Extensive reach of pre-survey distribution
- Small sample size limiting generalizability
- Restricted time-frame for OTSOPM review and post-survey completion

Future Directions

- Citizen Care should prioritize hiring a licensed OT to use the OTSOPM to guide programming, service delivery, and staff education.
- Future efforts should focus on identifying and prioritizing key areas for continued development and refinement of the OTSOPM.
- Future initiatives should prioritize structured staff education on OT resources and their application to enhance understanding, service integration, and program effectiveness.

Approach



Needs Assessment:

Determine OT needs at Citizen Care by meeting with individuals supported and staff

On-site Observations:

Disseminate Qualtrics pre-survey and assess current services provided by Citizen Care, which include residential services and community-based supports

Data Collection:

Evaluate results from Qualtrics pre-survey and synthesize evidence-based OT practices and observations at Citizen Care to guide development of the OTSOPM

Project Creation:

Develop and present the OTSOPM to Citizen Care administrative staff

Results

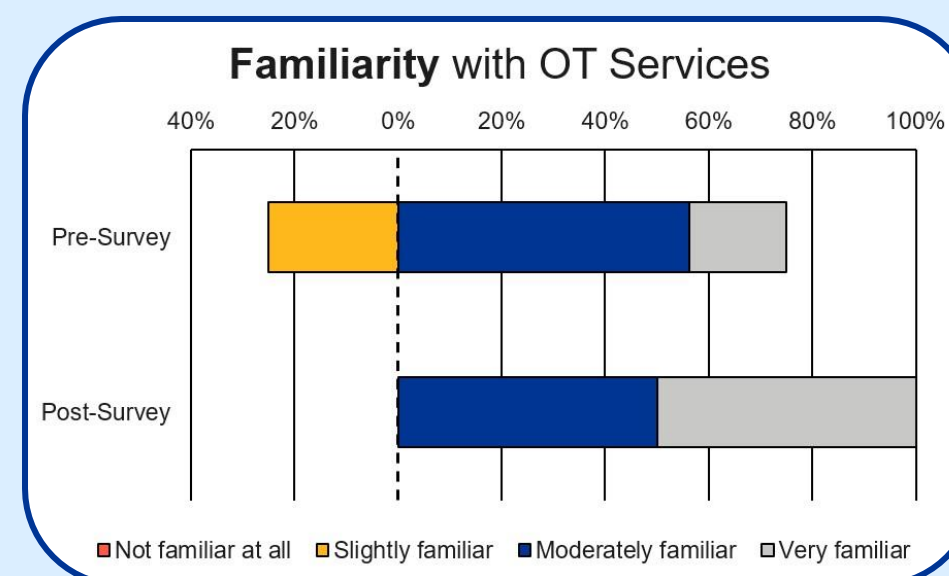


Figure 1: Familiarity with OT Services

Administrative staff's familiarity with OT services in community-based settings was measured **before and after** the dissemination of the OTSOPM using a Likert scale ranging from "not familiar at all" to "very familiar." The dashed line on the graph indicates a neutral response.

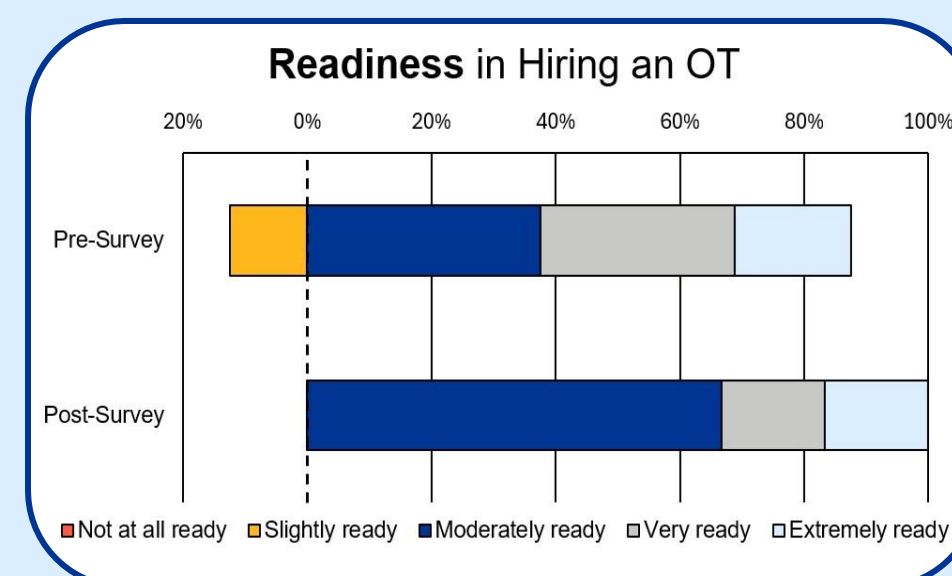


Figure 2: Readiness in Hiring an OT

Administrative staff's readiness in hiring an OT was measured **before and after** the dissemination of the OTSOPM using a Likert scale ranging from "not at all ready" to "extremely ready." The dashed line on the graph indicates a neutral response.

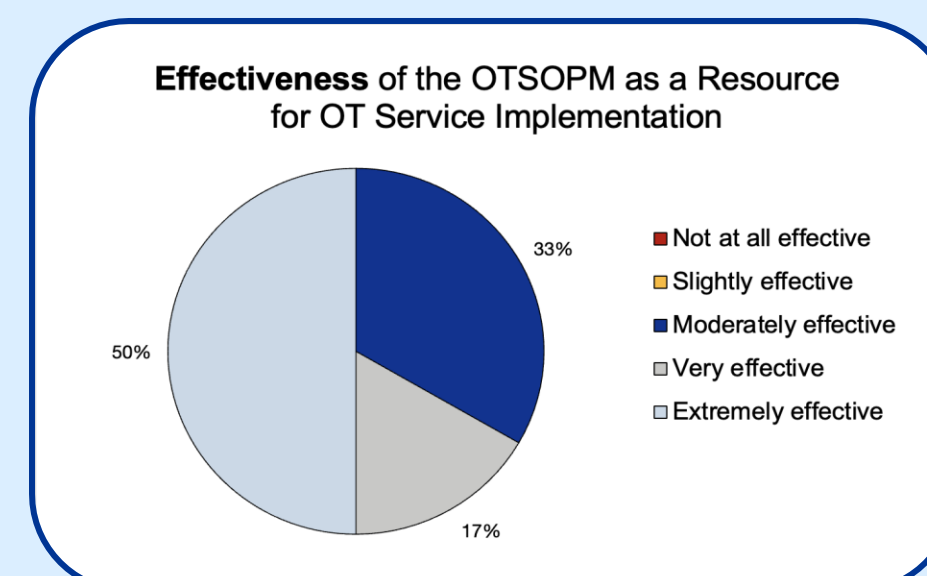


Figure 3: Effectiveness of the OTSOPM as a Resource for OT Service Implementation

The effectiveness of the OTSOPM as a resource to help administrative staff understand the implementation of OT services at Citizen Care was measured **after** the dissemination of the OTSOPM using a Likert scale ranging from "not at all effective" to "extremely effective."

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our site mentor, Patricia Dethlefs, B.S., M.A., and Jennifer Zaken for their guidance and support throughout this project. We are also grateful to the Citizen Care staff for their collaboration and insight. Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation to the individuals supported at Citizen Care, whose participation made this project meaningful and possible.

References

- Blaskowitz, M. G., Famularo, E., Lonergan, M., McGrady, E., Layer, L., Randall, L., & Zelenko, M. (2018). Closing the gap: Identifying quality-of-life disparities for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in transition. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 72*(4_Supplement_1). <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2018.72s1-po1020>
- Patten, K. K., Murthi, K., Onwumere, D. D., Skaletski, E. C., Little, L. M., & Tomchek, S. D. (2024). Occupational therapy practice guidelines for autistic people across the lifespan. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 78*(3). <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2024.078301>