

PREPARING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS TO PROVIDE INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY-BASED EXPERIENCES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Category: Developmental/Intellectual Disabilities

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INTRODUCTION:

Currently, occupational therapy students have limited opportunity to work with adults on the autism spectrum in their academic coursework and fieldwork experiences. This paucity in educational exposure could contribute to the lack of established services for this population. Increasing the availability of creative community-based opportunities focused on working with adults on the autism spectrum will provide occupational therapy students the education and experience they need to support clients with autism regardless of practice setting. In this workshop, we will discuss the need for services for adolescents/adults on the autism spectrum, current programming efforts at three US universities, and how lessons learned from these programs can apply to university, community, and other settings.

OBJECTIVES:

Participants will:

1. Describe the current state of US community programming for adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum.
2. Identify value in academic preparation for future occupational therapists to support individuals on the autism spectrum through community-based experiences.
3. Discuss community-based experiences for adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum provided by occupational therapy students at the University of Southern California, Boston University, and Towson University.
4. Identify strategies to develop community-based experiences for adolescents and adults in various settings.

TEACHING METHODS:

Interactive lecture with videos, small and large group discussion, case application, creative hands-on activity, video conference with autism self-advocates