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Assessment of Need for Driver Rehabilitation Programs in Rural Communities: A focused analysis on Laurens Country, South Carolina.

Courtney N. Kozar
Nova Southeastern University, ck865@mynsu.nova.edu

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Courtney Kozar, OTD-S, COTA/L, MS
Cindy Erb, OTD, MSH, OTR/L, CNDT, CLT & Presbyterian College



Figures 1: Presbyterian College final logo created.

Introduction

- SC has the 22nd-highest rate of fatal collision involving and older driver (Palumbo et al., 2019).
- According to Pan et al. (2020), the top three causes for the failure to repair decreasing driving ability were **financial factors**, **knowledge of driving adaptations**, and a **lack of access to competent service providers**.
- OTs are the leading professionals in driver's rehabilitation and will continue to develop the field (Peirce, 2005).
- Accessible driver rehabilitation programs can help bridge the transportation needs of rural areas like South Carolina as they provide a solution to engage people who lack developed driving skills, keep individuals on the roads longer, and keep the intricate rural roads safer.

Site Description

Program's Mission Statement: *The mission of the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program at Presbyterian College is to emulate the principles and values of the college, profession, and community to educate, mentor, and prepare skilled occupational therapists, servant leaders, and innovative researchers who promote evidenced-based practice, advocacy, diversity, and scholarship.*

Program Goals:

- Interprofessional education is a hallmark of the program and involves connections with other health professionals across the campus and in the community.
- Research is a main focus of the program in various emerging practice areas.
- The high-quality program and the curriculum is rigorous and engaging. The future graduates are prepared to improve the quality of life for people in a compassionate and respectful way.

PC MOTO: "Dum vivimus servimus: while we live we serve."

Summary of Needs Assessment

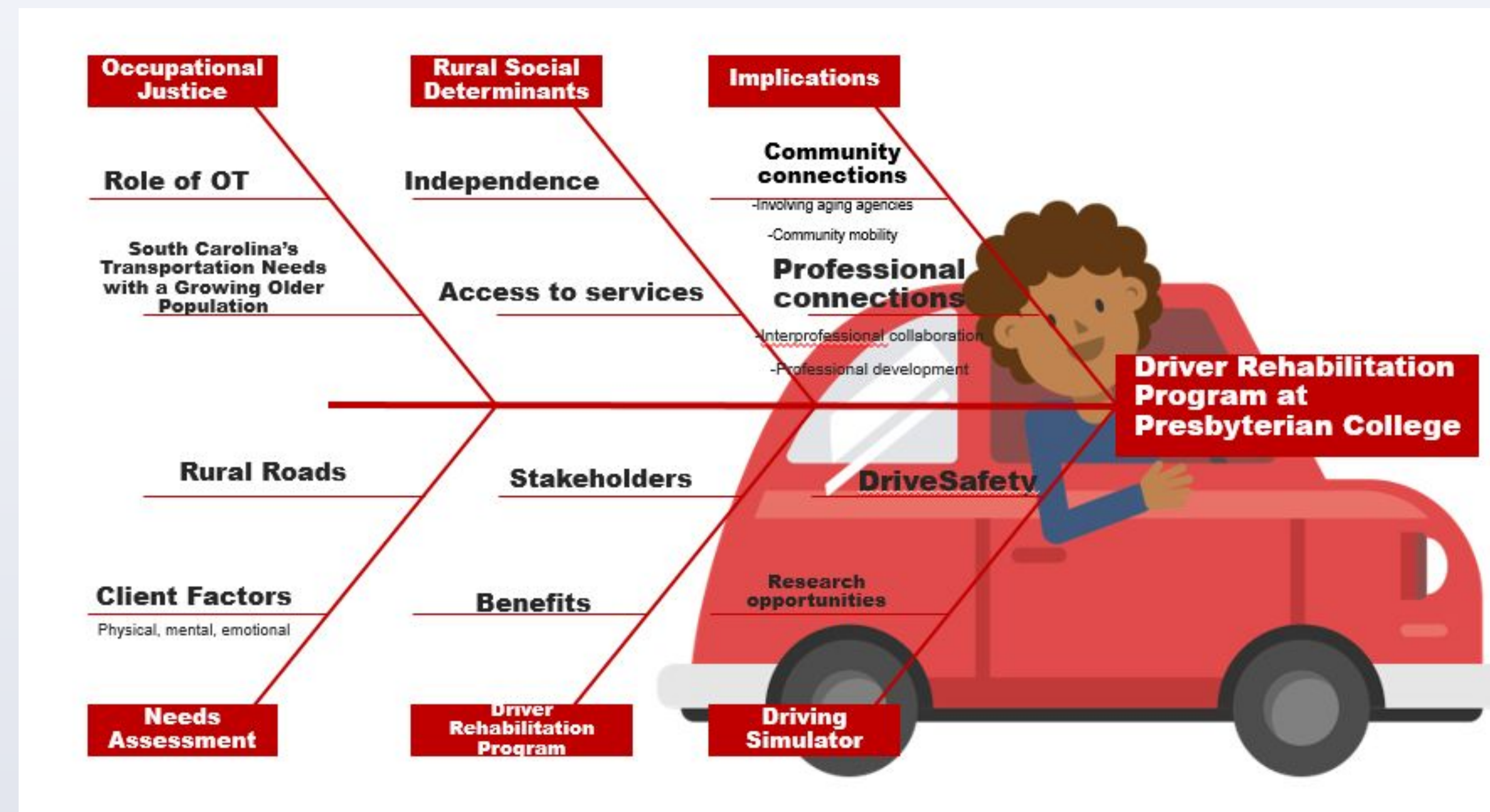
Three identified needs of the site:

1. Addressing social determinants of rural community.
2. Developing a Driver Rehabilitation Program.
3. Providing assistance as the PC OTD establishes program in areas of curriculum, admissions, and delivery.



Figures 2: State of South Carolina with iconic palm tree and palmetto moon.

Capstone Project Description



Figures 3: Above is the fish chart image used to present for in class presentation.

The need for driver rehabilitation in the state of SC was explored and confirmed through this capstone project, further identifying the role of OT within a pilot program to facilitate future research, program development, education, and policy changes.

Driver Rehabilitation Project Goals

1. Investigate the unique challenges related to transportation and how it affects people's general health and ability to receive health care in rural communities.
2. Provide an analysis of rural South Carolina's current service availability, referral processes, reporting practices, and obstacles was provided in this assessment.
3. The ultimate objective of this capstone project was to identify the potential benefits of establishing a driver rehabilitation program open to the public and to the community. Interprofessional communication and service advantages for the elderly population are part of the plan.

Literature Review Summary

- **Occupational Justice:** The Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF; 2021) stipulates that "a community that lacks accessible and inclusive physical environments and provides limited services and supports [makes] participation difficult or even dangerous for people who have disabilities" (p. 11).
- **Rural Social Determinants:** The term "social determinants" has emerged to describe the dynamic relationship between society and environmental contexts. Social determinants of health are specifically used to describe how various healthcare considerations can affect a person's social environment (Singh et. al, 2017).
- **South Carolina's Needs:** In South Carolina, awareness of health literacy and access to trained service providers are consistent inhibitory factors. Like many areas in South Carolina, the rural populations face increased barriers to critical social and health care needs. These barriers include limited access to physicians, insufficient infrastructures, and lack of specialty healthcare (Bushy, 2014).

Learning Objectives Achieved

1. Develop an understanding of curriculum development in compliance with ACOTE and college standards.
2. Work collaboratively with other higher education stakeholders in areas of research and evidenced-based practice implementation of the Driver's Rehabilitation Program.
3. Engage in content delivery to OTD entry-level students and provided effective feedback during course delivery.
4. Contribute to the development of community relationships and community programming for rural environments.



Figures 4: A picture of Courtney Kozar using driving simulator

Implications for OT Practice

Implementation of a driver rehabilitation program in rural areas like Laurens County has a variety of implications to include:

- Integration into other educational programs to make roads safer.
- Opportunities for interprofessional collaboration.
- Address and develop programming for distracted driving
- Professional development within the field of occupational therapy.
- Opportunities for assessment and interventions for individuals with disabilities.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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References Available Upon Request