

8-7-2022

## The Importance of Mental Health Resources for Individuals Experiencing Trauma

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### NSUWorks Citation

Toni Rose Derequito. 2022. *The Importance of Mental Health Resources for Individuals Experiencing Trauma*. Capstone. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, . (96)  
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# The Importance of Mental Health Resources for Individuals Experiencing Trauma

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## INTRODUCTION

- Current literature describes a lack of available mental health resources among those who are uninsured.
- United Against Poverty (UAP) is an organization that serves individuals and families regardless of insurance.
- Purpose: To provide life-skill workshops and events to low-income families and homeless individuals and to provide availability of information on workshop contents via a resource binder.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

- UAP is a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization.
- Mission:** To serve those in poverty by providing crisis care, case management, transformative education, food, and household subsidy, employment training and placement, personal empowerment training, and active referrals to other collaborative social service providers.
- Vision:** Communities where every family has access to basic needs, nutritional food, crisis care, education, and employment training, and where everyone has the opportunity to achieve a future filled with hope and possibilities.
- Services & Population Served:** Diverse adult population to assist with counseling for substance abuse, discounted grocery center, mental health, and domestic violence, job training and special skill training.



Figure 1. United Against Poverty. (2022).  
Unitedagainstopoverty.org

## SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- UAP requested help to develop and implement client-centered workshops.
  - Gain an understanding of the population seen at UAP to identify appropriate workshop topics.
  - Create a centralized location of information from workshops accessible to clients if a client is unable to attend a workshop.

## LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

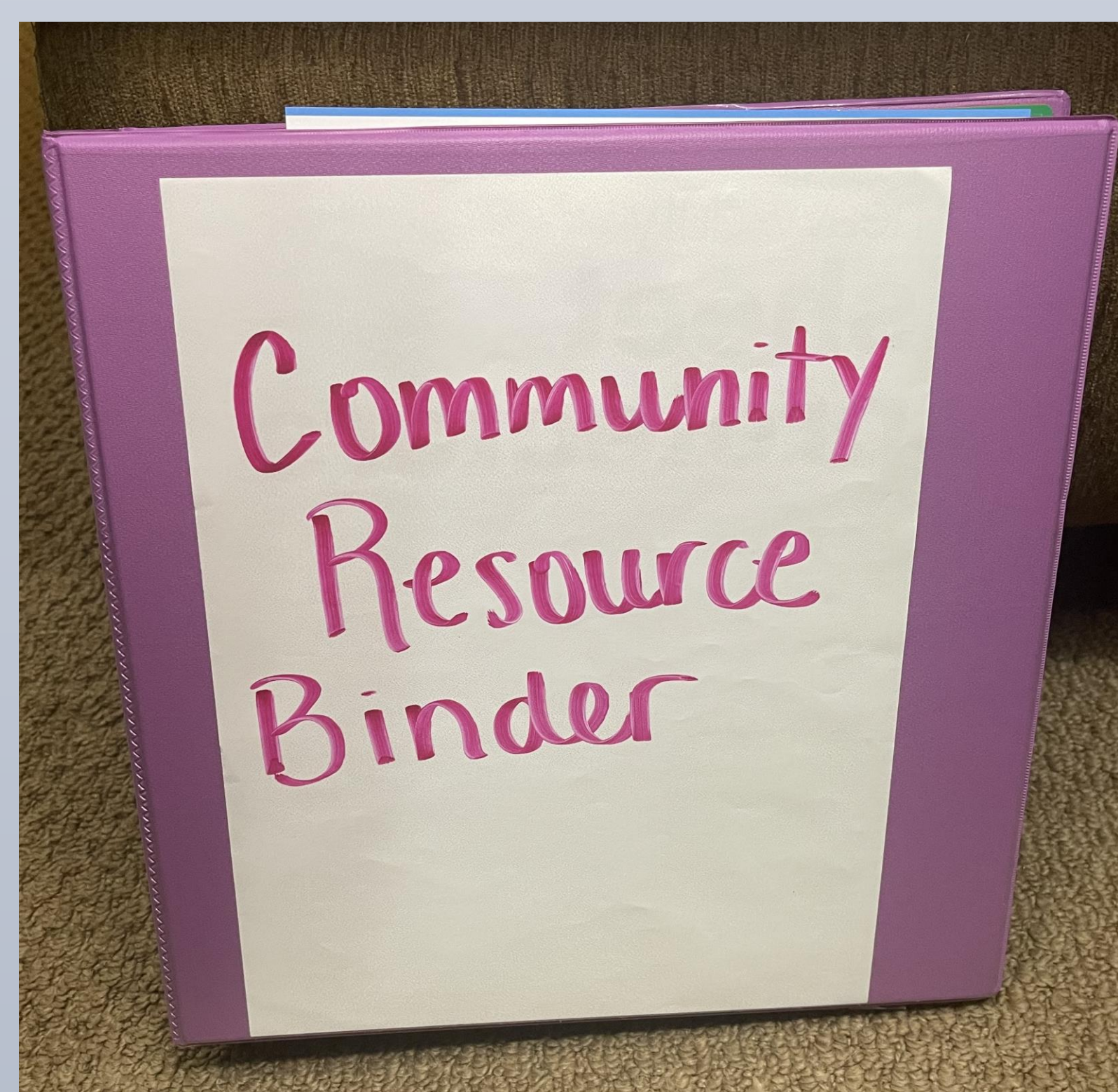


Figure 2. Mental Health America. <https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america>

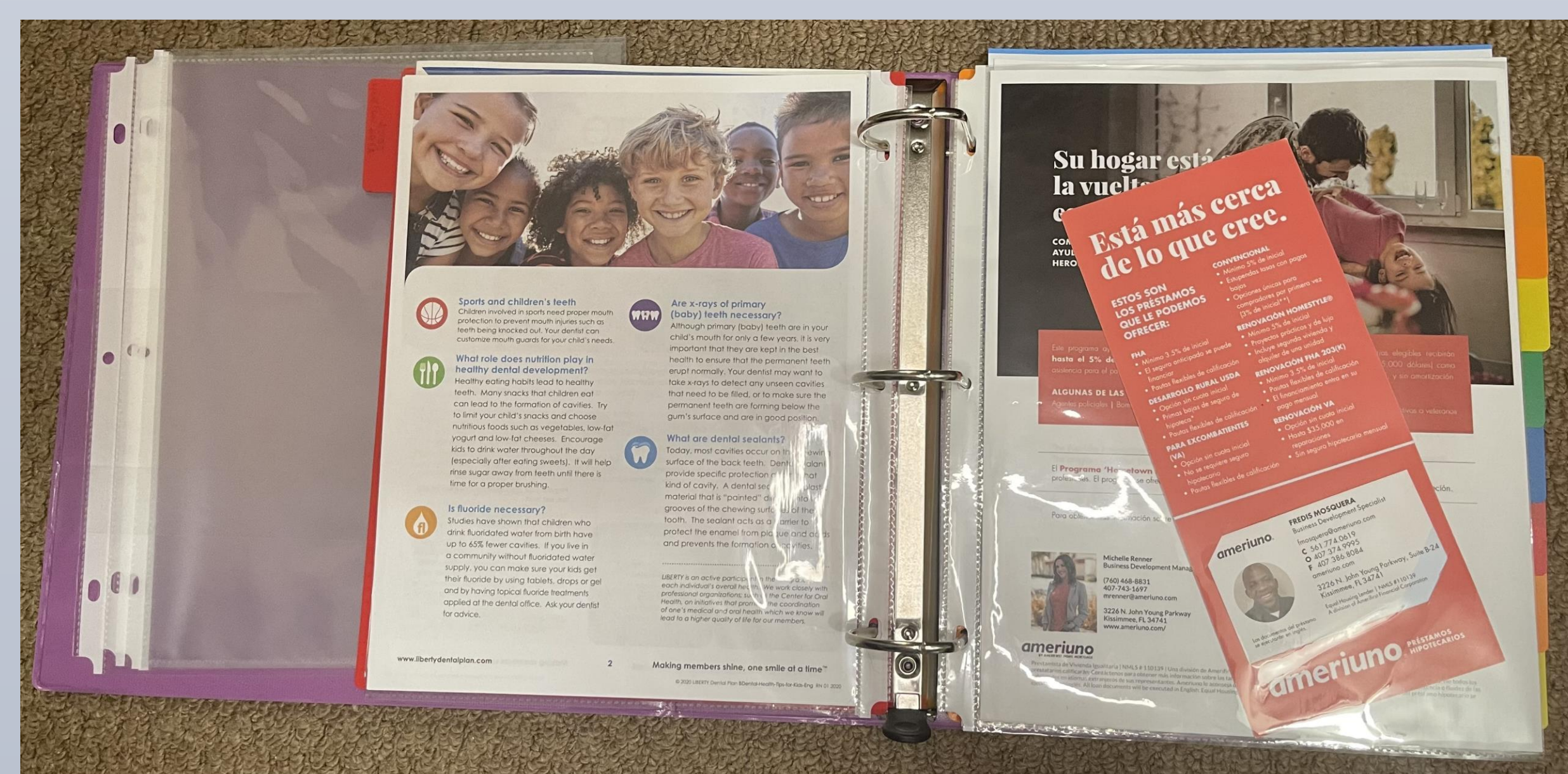
- Mental health in occupational therapy dates to the 18th century focusing on the moral treatment of clients, mental hygiene, and arts and crafts.
- The purpose of occupational therapy is to help individuals to participate and engage fully in their everyday lives and in their everyday occupations, thus re-incorporating mental health practices in intervention.
- About 6 of every 10 men (or 60%) and 5 of every 10 women (or 50%) experience at least one trauma in their lives.
- Approximately 24.7% of adults with mental illness reported an unmet need for treatment.
- 4.58% of adults report having serious thoughts of suicide.
- 11.1% of Americans with a mental illness are uninsured.
- 8.1% of children had private insurance that did not cover mental health services.
- There is a lack of mental health literacy. If an adolescent does not perceive a problem, then he believes he has no reason to engage in treatment.

## CAPSTONE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- This capstone project focused on program development to provide life skill workshops for the homeless, low-income families, and other individuals who might need extra help.
- Local corporations, such as the Department of Children and Families, Center for Change, and Chase Bank, were contacted to facilitate workshops based on the corresponding topic.
  - Examples of workshop topics: financial literacy, water safety, and senior safety.
- Two large-scale community events were planned, hosting 8-15 vendors each.
  - Health fair: provided free health screening and preventative services, such as vision screening, HIV testing, and blood pressure readings.
  - Back-to-school event: local vendors provided information on services and free school supplies were provided for each child that attended.
- At the end of each workshop or event, a packet of was created and placed in a centralized resource binder.

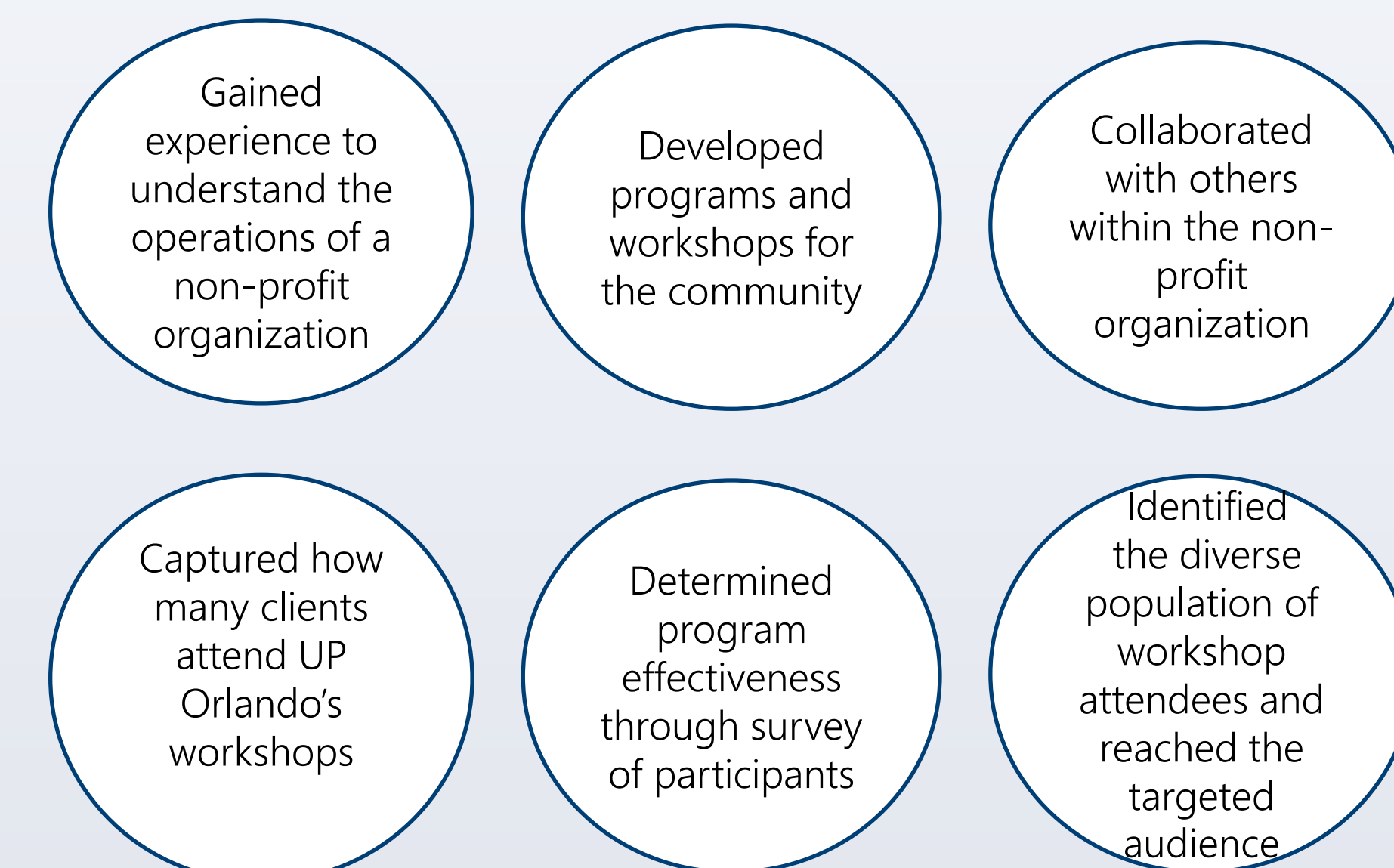


Example of the centralized resource binder.



Example of the internal contents within the binder.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED



## IMPLICATIONS OF OT PRACTICE

- There was a lack of knowledge of occupational therapy within UAP.
  - Within a non-traditional setting, advocacy for the role of occupational therapy is necessary to educate staff about how occupational therapy can benefit the site and the current mission and vision.
  - Learning how to collaborate with non-occupational therapy staff provides a smoother transition when implementing programs with address the occupational needs of the client.
- Further examination of providing workshops within a non-traditional setting.
  - Future students should implement surveys with recorded data collection that can interpret results to help identify the needs of the community.
  - Future students should also identify a way to ensure attendance at the workshops as some clients will RSVP without attending.

## REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest appreciation goes to Pamela Rivera, and my occupational therapy mentor, Dr. Mariana D'Amico, for their endless support and guidance that contributed to the completion of this capstone project. References are available upon request.