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Incorporating Poi as a Therapeutic Modality for Preschool Aged Children in The CARE Clinic

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Figure 1. Image includes two pairs of fuzzy, multicolored poi and one pair of LED poi with ability to adjust colors and patterns displayed.

Introduction

- Capstone experience focus areas: Advanced Clinical Practice Skills and Program Development
- Population: Clients aged zero to six receiving occupational therapy mental health services
- Introduced poi as a therapeutic modality for clients aged three to six that have identified behavioral, communication, and self-regulation deficits

Site Description

Desert Mountain Children's Center in Apple Valley, California
• Outpatient pediatric mental health clinic
The Comprehensive, Assessment, Research, and Evaluation (CARE) Clinic

- Ten-week intensive assessment program for ten children
- Four hours a day, five days a week with caregiver participation in parent-child interaction training (PCIT) sessions twice a week
- Comprised of a transdisciplinary team of one occupational therapist, one school psychologist, one speech-language pathologist, one marriage and family therapist, and four intervention specialists
- The occupational therapist utilizes sensory integration theory and regulation techniques



Figure 2. Sensory swings that are accessible during occupational therapy sessions.



Figure 3. Sensory integration equipment including a steam roller, roller slide, trampoline, spinning disk, rock wall, and a crash pad.



Figure 4. Pop up tunnel, balance board, ball pit, ladder, and a slide that provide vestibular, tactile, and proprioceptive input.

Literature Review Summary

- Poi is a multi-sensory expressive activity that uses a ball attached to a string repetitively and rhythmically swung around the body
- The fundamental characteristics of poi include object play, bilateral coordination, and rhythm (Riegle van West, 2018)
- Form of expressive play that provides children with a safe environment to develop adaptability, imagination, and pattern recognition (Riegle van West, 2018; Sirs, 2021)
- Poi offers immediate sensory feedback and opportunities for social interactions (Sirs & Meek, 2021)
- Poi can support a child's development in motor skills, bilateral integration, motor planning, and school-readiness skills (Sirs & Meek, 2021)
- There are a wide range of therapeutic applications and benefits for poi as it offers experiences to regulate internal mood states, relate to others, and is affordable and adaptable for a wide range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Clients in the CARE clinic have limited to no environmental affordances to promote play activities, often are currently experiencing or had experienced trauma, and have identified behavioral, communication, and self-regulation deficits that impede in their ability to participate and engage in daily occupations.
- Based on the available literature, the CARE clients would benefit from poi as a therapeutic modality due to the affordability and ability to utilize poi in their natural home, school, and community settings.
- Based on restricted environmental affordances to promote safe participation in play occupations, poi as a therapeutic modality would be beneficial for clients and caregivers to engage in safe, interactive play occupations.

Capstone Project Description

Weekly Overview of Poi Integration

Week One: Introduction and Education

- Facilitated creative exploration after modeling simple spinning
- Structured activity at beginning of session with verbal prompts and environmental modifications to reduce distractions

Week Two: Follow the Leader and Interactive Games

- Pattern recognition and sequencing by following one to four step pattern sequence
- Imitated and followed leader to learn associated moves for familiar song "wheels on the bus"

Week Three: Rhythm and Direction

- Rhythm development through a metronome and familiar children's songs
- Utilized large mirror to support motor planning and self corrections

Week Four: Creativity and Expansion

- Transitioned from sedentary engagement to standing and moving full body/more fluid movements
- Group tie-dye activity using kool-aid and food coloring to personalize their sock poi during recess time

Week Five: Unique Expression

- Multi-sensory, messy play, and creative exploration by using fabric markers and puffy paint to finish customizing their sock poi
- Introduced novel poi song titled "Spin Your Poi"

Week Six: Social Opportunities

- Practiced Wheels on the Bus and Spin Your Poi routines during interactive circle time and group interaction and play therapy sessions

Week Seven: Celebration and Reflection

- Modeled and led clients to perform poi routine during graduation with over 80 people in attendance

Program Overview

A seven-week program to incorporate poi as a therapeutic modality for clients in the CARE program through structured routine and exploration during individualized occupational therapy sessions and during group activities throughout the four-hour program. The poi-based activities were client-centered by ensuring the "just-right" challenge for each client's unique cognitive, sensory, and motor abilities.



Figure 5. Photograph captures the progression to create modified sock poi starting from two calf-height socks and finishing with example of my personalized poi.

Program Effectiveness

All transdisciplinary team members participated in an informal interview to measure their perception on the poi-based group activities and their perception on the effectiveness of poi as a therapeutic modality for the clients in the CARE program.

100% of the team members reported:

- They perceived that poi as a therapeutic modality is effective
- They all desired an increased role and responsibility within their respected professions for future cohorts in the CARE clinic

Learning Objectives Achieved

1. Increased clinical practice skills for early intervention populations and adolescents aged three to six within the mental health scope of practice using sensory integration interventions.
2. Collaborated with transdisciplinary team members to enhance cohesion and improve carryover for CARE clients and to enhance advanced clinical skills for clients aged zero to three receiving mental health services.
3. Developed and implemented a program that incorporates poi as a therapeutic modality to increase self-regulation and school-readiness skills in individualized OT sessions and group sessions.
4. Developed and organized comprehensive resources for transdisciplinary team members, caregivers, and clients through printed and video resources.

Implications for OT Practice



Figure 6. Image depicts poi characteristics consistent with the interdependent relationship within the Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance model.

All team members reported that they observed improvements in the following skills commonly addressed in pediatric occupational therapy services:

- Bilateral coordination
- Visual motor coordination
- Sensory regulation
- Gross motor coordination
- Comprehension of directional concepts and terminology

Future students

- Develop and implement pre- and post-intervention assessments with data collection with a focus area of research to increase evidence available on the clinical benefits of poi
- Become a Certified Poi Instructor through Kate Riegle van West's training courses
 - Utilize the resource subsidy form to request up to 90% discount on certification courses and other online resources

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References Available Upon Request