Title: Interdisciplinary Staff Perceptions of an Occupational Therapy Return to Work Program for People Living with AIDS

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Major Finding: Staff personnel viewed theory-based occupational therapy programming as having a uniformly positive impact in two residential facilities providing services to people living with AIDS.

Participants:
- Two supportive living facilities that provide programming to people living with AIDS
- Interdisciplinary staff members working at facilities included case managers, social workers, spiritual advisors, program directors, and an occupational therapist

Method: An independent evaluator collected data through focus groups and individual interviews with service providers in each facility over a two month period of time.

Analysis: Content analysis of the focus group and interview transcripts.

Findings:
- Staff identified four programmatic changes that occurred as a result of the provision of theory-based occupational therapy services:
  - Utilization of a holistic and process-oriented approach. This was accomplished by relating all activities to the process of returning to productive roles and through the use of the OPHI-II and other MOHO-based assessments.
  - An ability to identify and work with the strengths of clients, such as getting clients involved in planning therapy groups.
  - Emphasis on the learning of practical skills enabled clients to identify their internal resources to manage IADLs and challenges.
  - Creation of a context and framework for coordinating all aspects of services. The program provided a framework for thinking in an organized manner about a client’s progress at the facility.

Conclusion: Interdisciplinary staff members recognized the positive contributions that occupational therapy programming made within two supportive living facilities by improving participation of clients with HIV in learning both work-related skills and practical skills to enhance daily functioning.

Implications for future research: The impact of theory-based occupational therapy programming in other non-traditional settings should be examined to support the provision of services across contexts.

Evidence– based practice implications:
- The addition of theory-based occupational therapy services could be beneficial in many non-traditional interdisciplinary service settings.
- Theory-based OT programs that include hands on/practical sessions and OT specific assessment may best meet client needs and fill gaps not addressed by other interdisciplinary professions.
