SELF SOOTHE BOX EDUCATION

An Occupational Therapy Intervention For Social Prescribers
By kayleigh wain

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ALLIANCE TRAINING HUB

During a role emerging placement within a Nottinghamshire Alliance Training Hub, an Occupational Therapy (OT) Degree Apprentice provided education to social prescribing link workers to implement within primary care networks.

1. SCOPING THE SERVICE

The intervention aimed to align with the Training hubs core functions defined by the NHS Long Term Plan (NHS, 2019). To provide **education** to the **primary care workforce** to support effective delivery of healthcare needs within the **community.**

2. AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

Social prescribing (SP) Link Workers, were identified to be the recipients of the intervention.
The 'SP Delivery Meeting' reported that they were **struggling to cope** & identify interventions to use in response to an **increase in complex mental health referrals.** Link workers had received education on OT assessments, but had no current knowledge on OT interventions.

3. INTERVENTION

SP Link workers received occupational therapy based education to build upon their OT knowledge & received a printable resource on:
- Applying the **PEO model** in practice.
- The process on how and when to implement **self soothe boxes** for patients experiencing anxiety and depression.
- Recommendations of potential items to include relating to the 5 senses.
- The benefits of self soothe boxes to promote **emotional regulation.**

4. RELEVANCE TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTICE

The education was prevelant due to OT being under-utilised in primary care (Lyons- Maris, 2019), with a focus on social prescribing to reduce pressures on general practices (Bradley & Scott, 2021). The lack of OT involvement highlights the <u>prevalence of role emerging placements,</u> to support link workers on how to address barriers to engagement (Thew, Bell & Flanagan, 2017), by linking meaningful activity to health (Garside, 2020). The impact of providing OT education and evidence base for social prescribing can **develop and influence future practice of social prescribing** (RCOT, 2020).

5. DELIVERY

Due to Covid-19 the education was delivered by a variety of methods including a face to face session and virtually via TEAMS.
A 7 minute presentation for 'Mental Health Week 2021' was delivered **nationally** during a social prescribing webinar via TEAMS LIVE, was accessed by over 400 **link workers.**

Self Soothe Boxes

6. OT CONCEPTS

PEO Model: This model encompasses a client centred approach (Law et al.1996), by highlighting that the interaction of the person, environment and occupation facilitates participation. This framework was essential to discuss, due to it being a new criteria in the social prescribing competency framework. This promoting finding strategies to overcome the barriers to engagement in meaningful activity (Connolly et al., 2019, Fieldhouse, Bryant & Creek, 2014)

Flow: It was encouraged that items in the box should be meaningful and personalised to the individual to increase occupational flow (Wright et al., 2014). Flow promotes an individual to be immersed in an activity, that allows them to escape their thoughts for a moment, and encourages safe coping strategies (Reid, 2011).

7. EVALUATION

All Link workers recieved a google form to collate the effectiveness of the education, and whether they would apply self soothe boxes in practice. In total 20 link workers completed the evaluation:

95%
Reported they wanted further OT education on interventions

95%
Felt that the self soothe box education was engaging

100%
Reported they would implement self sooth boxes in practice

8. CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

- Due to Covid-19, this meant some education had to be virtual. To overcome this challenge, and ensure it was engaging a practice presentation was delivered to training hub employees to gain feedback to ensure it was stimulating and appropriate.

- Link workers had limited free time due to increase workloads.It was negotiated that education would last 30 minutes, and a step by step resource on implementing self soothe boxes was disseminated via email to all link workers. This ensured that if link workers couldnt attend, they would benefit from the resource.

9. IMPACT

"I have used the process already with a 24 yr old women with BPD and PTSD. It's working already, thank you so much."
SP Team Leader

A key impact from the intervention was the local and national recognition on the value of OT input to support social prescribers to implement effective OT interventions within primary care networks

.The evaluation results were sent to the Head of SP in the local area, which agreed they would look into further OT education, and is keen for furture OT students to have placements with social prescribers.

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