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Animal-assisted interventions for older adults

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Course Outcomes

- Explain how occupational therapy practitioners are trained to help older adults.
- Discuss one ecological model for considering intervention planning and implementation to promote health and well-being for older adults.
- Describe potential benefits and risks for older adults interacting with animals.
- Identify personal, environmental, and occupational factors that influence animal-assisted intervention planning and implementation.
Role of Occupational Therapy

- Rapidly increasing aging population
  - Experience negative health outcomes that impact functional independence and ability to engage in occupations
- Occupations: “chunks of activity that are meaningful and given value by the individual and their surroundings”

(U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, n.d; Colby & Ortman, 2015; Law et al., 1996)

Practice Model

(Law et al., 1996)
Occupations=Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL)

- “Activities to support daily life within the home and community that often require more complex interactions”

Pet Care: The Forgotten IADL

(Orellano et al., 2012; Kaushi, 1999; Grier, 2006; APPA, 2017)
Benefits and Risks of Animals for Older Adults

- Caring and nurturing
- Exercise
- Social interactions
- Prevent decline in performing activities of daily living
- Increase in health
- Decrease in service utilization
- Falls
- Financial burden
- Mobility and cognitive decline
- Psychological

(Anderson, Reid, & Jennings, 1992; Bauman, Russell, Furber, & Dobson, 2001; Dembicki & Anderson, 1996; Headey, 1999; Raina, Waltner-Toews, Bonnett, Woodward, & Abernathy, 1999; Serpell, 1991; Leland et al., 2012; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016; Beck & Katcher, 2003; Parslow et al., 2005)

Animal-assisted Interventions (AAI)

- Animal-assisted Therapy (AAT)
- Animal-assisted Education (AAE)
- Animal-assisted Activities (AAA)

(Petpartners.org, 2017)
Occupational Therapy IADL Interventions vs. Animal-assisted Therapy

- Before involving animals in intervention, think about client’s goals
- https://petpartners.org/learn/terminology/

(Pet Partners, 2018)
Evaluation

- Occupational profile
- Analysis of occupational performance
- Goal planning

(Lynne & Trautmann, 2014; Eakman, Carlson, & Clark, 2010).

Example

- Mr. T is a 70-year-old widow and retired veterinarian for small animals. He lives alone in a ranch style home and all of his family live at least 30 minutes away.
- Mr. T must complete all of his daily activities independently. Mr. T shared that he remains busy caring for his three Jack Russell dogs.
- Two weeks ago, he was discharged from the hospital and allowed to return home after having right total hip replacement surgery. He is currently on strict hip precautions until his doctor advises otherwise. These include: avoid bending past 90 degrees, avoid twisting legs in or out, and avoid crossing legs.
- Mr. T is having difficulty caring for his beloved dogs; he further shared that he is always in a lot of pain after completing pet care related tasks.
- Observations of Mr. T feeding and watering his dogs, show that he bends down past 90 degrees to pick up and set down the dogs’ dishes. Mr. T also bends down to pick up his dogs’ toys when playing fetch with them.
- It is collaboratively decided that addressing his pet care role is a priority.
Occupation-based Intervention

- Plan: guides practitioners’ actions; setting goals and timeframes, approach, methods for service delivery, etc.
- Implementation: carrying out the plan and observing response

Example

- Goal: Mr. T will safely and independently feed and water his dogs following his hip precautions within 1 week of being given environmental modification strategies during 2 occupational therapy sessions.
- Implementation: Instead of Mr. T bending down to pick up and place the dogs’ bowls, Mr. T fill a watering can to pour the food and water into the bowls. Therapist moved the food to a pullout drawer with a scooper that was high enough so that Mr. T would not disrupt his hip precautions. In order to be able to play with his dogs, the therapist proposed that Mr. T purchase a long-handled ball launcher to prevent him from bending over to grab any toys.
Reevaluation

- Review plan and targeted outcomes
  - Use same measures from initial evaluation
- Modify plan as needed
- Continue or discontinue services
- Use evidence

Example

- Mr. T demonstrated feeding and watering his pets
  - Occupational performance
- Mr. T self-reported no pain and increased awareness of hip precautions
- Discontinued services

(Chisholm & Boyt Schell, 2014)
Scenario #1

Identify what you would do to evaluate the situation

What might you propose for an occupation-based intervention plan and how would you implement that plan?

How might you communicate your plan to Mrs. Jones?

How would you evaluate progress?

Mrs. Jones is a 76-year-old widowed woman, currently living alone with her 7-year-old short haired domestic cat, Betty. She lives in an apartment and has no family members who live nearby. The manager of her apartment complex has called your agency to ask if you might be of some assistance with a growing problem. Within the last six months, the apartment manager has received numerous complaints about the smell of cat urine coming from Mrs. Jones’s apartment. When the manager has talked to Mrs. Jones about this problem, Mrs. Jones has expressed extreme anxiety over the prospect of being forced to relinquish Betty. These fears have resulted in a lack of appetite, causing a weight loss that has placed Mrs. Jones significantly under her recommended weight. The manager feels badly for adding to Mrs. Jones anxiety, but cannot continue to let her keep Betty unless something changes.
Scenario #2

Identify what you would to evaluate the situation.

What might you propose for an occupation-based intervention plan and how would you implement that plan?

How might you communicate your plan to Mr. Ramone?

How would you evaluate progress?

Mr. Ramone is an 86-year-old man who lives with his 8-year-old golden retriever, Max. Mr. Ramone was recently hospitalized because of a fall at home. He explained in the emergency room that he tried to break his fall and landed on his arm, breaking his wrist. When asked about the fall, he explained that the kitchen floor was wet, likely from Max’s drinking bowl. He strongly expressed the fact that he had no intention of relinquishing Max, but was concerned about future falls. He also mentioned that he has been struggling with lifting the large bag of dog food that is delivered monthly. The hospital has called your agency to see if you can assist Mr. Ramone.
THE END….

QUESTIONS?

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References

References Cont.


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