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Guest Editor: Christine Helfrich, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

- Mon 11/16 OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: The Medically Complex Client
Simone Gill, PhD, OTR/L, Christine Helfrich, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Danny Shin, OTR/L
- Tues 11/17 OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Adolescents in Group Homes
Joanna Stumper, MS, OTR/L
- Wed 11/18 OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Promoting School Participation, A Trauma-Informed Approach
Amanda M. Rodriguez, OTD, MOT, OTR/L
- Thurs 11/19 OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Persons Experiencing Homelessness
Caitlin Synovec, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH
- Fri 11/20 OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Older Adults
Elizabeth Alicea Torres, MS, OTR/L

OT's Mental Health Response to the COVID Pandemic: Promoting School Participation - A Trauma Informed Approach

Dr. Amanda M. Rodriguez, OTD, MOT, OTR/L

Amanda M. Rodriguez, OTD, MOT, OTR/L

Amanda M. Rodriguez is a practicing occupational therapist with an identified passion for mental health care across the lifespan. Amanda has worked as a mental health professional since 2007 working with adults with severe and pervasive mental health diagnoses in a community-based setting. For the last six years, she has worked as an occupational therapist providing care to adolescents in group home care as well as working with children and families in the continuum model. Amanda recently transitioned into school-based practice work in late 2018 at a small, intensive therapeutic school in Massachusetts. In all areas of practice, Amanda deeply values the therapeutic use of self, sensory-based interventions, and trauma-informed care in supporting the individual's capacity to achieve. Since 2014, Amanda has also served as an adjunct professor at Bay Path University in the occupational therapy department. Presently, she also provides consultative services as an occupational therapist to Medically Involved Mental Illness (MIMI) adults living in residential care.



- Presenter Disclosure: Financial: Amanda M. Rodriguez has received an honorarium for presenting this course. Non-financial: Amanda M. Rodriguez has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.
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Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

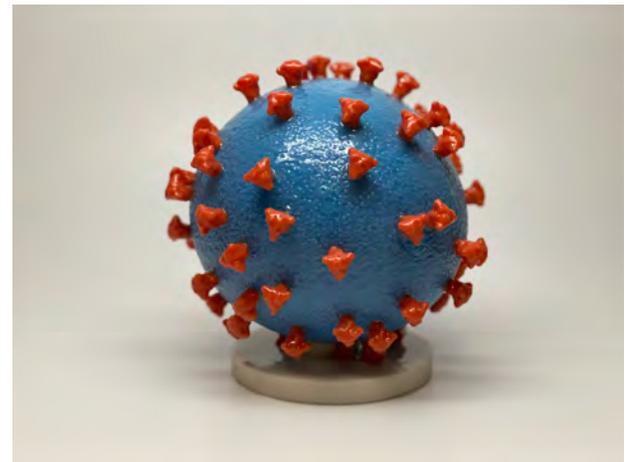
- Recognize how the student experience of the pandemic may be regarded as a traumatic
- List three or greater nervous system responses to trauma
- Identify three or greater trauma informed intervention approaches to promote student participation in the classroom

Course Overview

- Background Information
 - COVID & Students
- Stress / Trauma
 - Stress Response
- Trauma Informed Care
- Interventions
 - Sensory, Body-Based, Meaningful Occupation, Therapeutic Use of Self
- Application
- Summary

Background Information

- Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted student educational experience
 - Direct
 - Indirect
 - Experiences may be regarded as traumatic
- Impact student participation in education
 - OT Role



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Stress and Trauma



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- Stress
 - “actual or perceived threat to homeostasis”
- Trauma
 - Real or perceived threat to life or serious injury
 - Exceeds ability to cope
- Experiences of stress over time

The Stress Response

- Autonomic Nervous System
 - Responsible for maintaining homeostasis, unconscious
 - Afferent Pathways
 - Spinal cord and Cranial Nerves (VII, IX, and X)
 - Efferent Pathways
 - Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Nervous System
- Hypothalamus, Thalamus, and Limbic System
 - Modulatory functions



The Stress Response Cont.

- Sympathetic - Fight or Flight
 - All things needed for bear attack
- Parasympathetic - Rest and Digest
 - Energy conservation
- Harmonious Interplay
 - Sympathetic Up, Parasympathetic Down
 - Sympathetic Down, Parasympathetic Up
- Engaging Parasympathetic
 - Vagus Nerve



Impact on Participation

- What does this look like in the classroom?
 - Hypervigilance
 - Increased heart rate
 - Thermoregulation
 - Emotion Regulation Challenges
 - Decreased Attention
 - Decreased Cognitive Function
 - Withdrawal
- Learning v Surviving
- Long-term Exposure
 - Health Implications

Trauma Informed Care



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- Trauma Informed Care (TIC)
 - Recognizes the prevalence of trauma among individuals
 - An understanding of the physiological and social effects of trauma
 - Cooperative and skilled approach to trauma
- Universal Precaution for Mental Health

TIC: Six Key Principles

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

TIC & Student Participation

- Sensory Interventions
- Body-Based Interventions
- Meaningful Occupation
- Therapeutic Use of Self

Sensory Interventions

- “...sensory based interventions are used, in part, to help facilitate the stabilization of the ANS response, to specifically target SPDs, and to enhance occupational participation.”

Champagne, 2011, p. CE-3

TIC Principles

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness & Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice & Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

Sensory 101

- Generally Calming

- Repetition
- Familiarity
- Consistency
- Neutrality
- Positive Associations
- Slow Paced and Rhythmic
- Simple Activities

- Generally Alerting

- Unexpected
- Novelty
- Irregularity
- Intensity
- Complexity
- Incongruity
- Negative Associations
- Fast Paced Movement

Sensory-Based Interventions

- Consider the Environment
 - At Home & At School
- Consider Sensory Diets
- Yoga
 - Extensive Research in Support
 - Opportunities
- Weighted Vests/Stability Balls
 - Research; Case by case
- Student Specific
 - Use of Assessment



TIC Principles

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness & Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice & Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

Sample Home Learning Space



Body-Based Interventions

Vagal Interventions

- Cold
- Breath work
 - Slow and Deep
 - Masks
 - Promote Nose Breathing
- Singing! Laughing!
- Meditation
- Exercise

BioFeedback

- BioDots
 - Mood Rings
- Heart Rate Check
 - Wearables
 - Pulse Oximeter
- HeartMath
 - HRV

TIC Principles

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness & Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice & Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

Body-Based Interventions





TIC Principles

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness & Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice & Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

- **Meaningful Occupation**

- Impact on Nervous System
- Practice Guidelines
 - Activity & Occupation based
 - Life skills, sports, and yoga

- **Therapeutic Use of Self**

- Forming safe relationships
- Genuine connection
- Avoid punitive actions for non-participation

Application: Case Study Student

- You are providing OT services virtually and the typically attentive and enthusiastic 10 yo student is highly distractible, irritable, and unwilling to participate. Dad comes on the screen to apologize and says the student had a tough weekend – their mom, a doctor on a COVID unit, tested positive for the virus. The student identifies feeling tense with racing thoughts about their mother’s condition when prompted. The student also reports feeling disorganized. How do you respond?
- Interventions:
- How are these TIC?:

Application: Case Study Class

- You have been asked by a school administrator to support students in a 6th grade classroom. The students and teacher have just returned to school after a two-week quarantine period following a positive COVID test. The students appear anxious about being back in the building and its all they've been talking about all morning. They're having a tough time orienting to the classroom space given the time away, too. How do you respond?
- Interventions:
- How are these TIC?:

Summary

- Pandemic as potentially traumatic
- Stress response impacts participation
 - ANS
 - Sympathetic and Parasympathetic NS
- Trauma Informed Care
 - Universal MH Precaution
- TIC Interventions
 - Sensory, Body, Meaningful Occ, Therapeutic Use of Self

Questions?

- Email: ARodriguezOTR@gmail.com

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