

Bearings House: Community Reintegration Project

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Population

- The Bearings House is a new program occurring at Long Creek Youth Development Center (LCYDC) that is designed to be a transitional program for juvenile offenders in the state of Maine reintegrating into the community in a supported setting.
- The house is located in South Portland, Maine and fully staffed and funded by LCYDC.
- Four teenage males resided in the house and participated in the program.
- Their interests included sports, video games, music, and food.
- The residents identified their areas for improvement as emotion regulation, confidence, and making decisions.

Overall Motive

Long Creek Youth Development Center offers a variety of activities, an education, mentorship, and structure for Bearings House residents. In addition to those programs, we hoped through building a relationship with residents we could identify their occupational interests and assist in their transition to life in the community. We strived to support residents through their transition to Bearings House and give them an opportunity to further explore their interests as well as expose them to new occupations they may have not previously participated in order to help as they reintegrate into the community.

Assessment

A needs assessment in the form of an interest checklist was provided to the residents to understand each individual's interests, wants, and needs from the weekly sessions. The assessment consisted of 4 questions including topics of interest, a leisure activities checklist, and the individual's strengths and areas of improvement. The client-centered approach guided the design of the meeting sessions to optimize engagement and progress.

Sessions

A total of 9 sessions with the 4 residents took place in the Bearings House.

Sessions included:

- Games and socialization to build rapport and promote trust.
- Collaborative calendar building to plan client-chosen activities.
- Online budgeting game that challenged the ability to make decisions based on a financial budget and developed knowledge of concepts surrounding saving, credit cards, bills, and sacrifice.
- Engagement in the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory to identify coping responses frequently used (Carver, 1997).
- Interactive game of modified Jenga to promote self-reflection, group discussion, and peer support regarding positive coping strategies.
- Introduction of the Wellness Recovery Action Plan to provide a resource for self-directed reflection (Copeland, 2008).

Implications

Throughout this project social work and occupational therapy students were able to provide support for residents of the Bearings House as they reintegrate into the community. Our aim to help develop routines, identify ways to fill unstructured time (ie: leisure activities, hobbies, social activities), and address mental health goals will provide the residents with the tools they need for future transition to community living.

COVID - 19

Due to COVID-19, The University of New England terminated site-based projects and Long Creek also reduced non-essential people in the building. Based on the precautions UNE and Long Creek are taking to limit the spread of the virus, we had to end our project.

Future Steps

We have collaborated with the Service Learning Department on how to continue this project in the future in order to give the opportunity for all professions to support this population's transition back into the community.

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