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Fall 12-8-2022

## Enhancing Leisure Participation for Women who are Experiencing Homelessness

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### Recommended Citation

Truong, C., University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences., & MacDermott, S. (2022, December 8). Enhancing Leisure Participation for Women who are Experiencing Homelessness. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesfall2022/2>

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# Leisure Participation for Women who are Experiencing Homelessness

Christine Truong, OTS; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

## BACKGROUND

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (n.d.) stated that 8.3 women per 10,000 individuals in the United States experience homelessness. The role of occupational therapy with the homeless population includes addressing the needs and improving the quality of life (QOL) for people experiencing homelessness (Tyminski et al., 2020). Chan (2018) found that among 37 participants with a disability and a history of homelessness, leisure had the second highest satisfaction rating and a strong association with QOL. Individuals experiencing homelessness have limited opportunities to engage in meaningful occupations, such as leisure.

## PROBLEM

Klitzing (2004) found that there are limited opportunities for women experiencing homelessness to engage in leisure activities; thus, there is a need for more leisure engagement and program development that address leisure for this population.

## PURPOSE

To develop a program for a residence serving women who are at risk of homelessness to improve leisure participation and exploration.

Acknowledgment: Special thanks to my mentor, Kelcey Storkersen, OTD, OTR/L

## PROGRAM

### General Program Goals:

- Promote leisure exploration and participation in daily life
- Promote wellness and increase engagement in activities that support wellness
- Promote engagement in activities within the client's environment
- Provide a guide for future programming

### Program Structure:

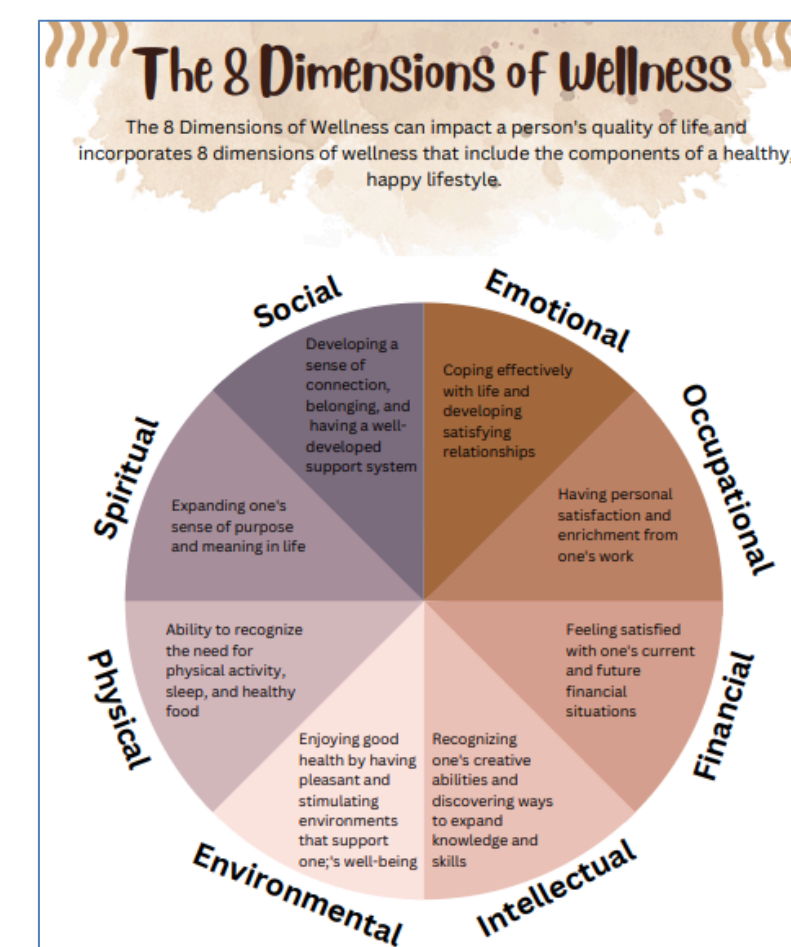
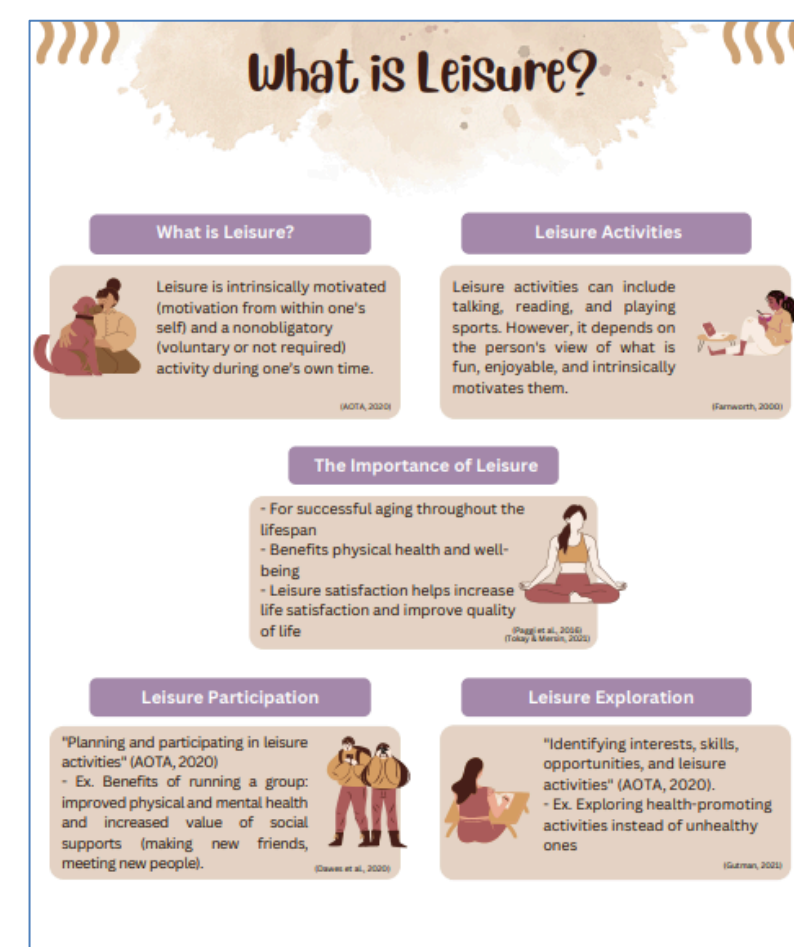
- Session 1: Education on Leisure and The 8 Dimensions of Wellness
- Session 2: Education on Emotional Wellness and Yoga Activity
- Session 3: Education on Social Wellness and Card Game and Tea Activity
- Session 4: Education on Physical Wellness and Progressive Muscle Relaxation Activity
- Session 5: Education on Spiritual Wellness and Painted Gratitude Rocks Activity
- Session 6: Education on Intellectual Wellness and Mindfulness Meditation Activity
- Session 7: Education on Financial Wellness and DIY Tea Towel Activity
- Session 8: Education on Occupational Wellness and Faux Stained Butterfly Activity
- Session 9: Education on Environmental Wellness and Paint Night Activity

### Interventions:

- Education on "The 8 Dimensions of Wellness" and leisure
- Mindfulness and self-care techniques
- Community participation
- Engagement in meaningful leisure activities to increase well-being

### Program Components:

- Completed program manual
- Proposed 9 sessions (90 minutes each) to be completed in 9 weeks
- Resources for clients to promote continued wellness



## METHODS

- Informal interviews with clients of the Community Mission of Hope (CMOH) and residents of the Empowerment Village.
- Responses from CMOH staff and volunteers via Google Form
- Observations of clients, staff, and volunteers during working hours
- Built rapport with clients, staff, and volunteers

### Theoretical Frameworks:

- The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO)
- The Model of Occupational Empowerment

## DISCUSSION

- Staff members reported the value and importance of leisure, but the limited physical space of CMOH.
- Clients at CMOH and Empowerment Village both stated that leisure is important.

## References

- Chan, D. V. (2018). Examining quality of life for people with disabilities who were once homeless. *The Journal of Rehabilitation, 84*(4), 13.
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- Tyminski, Q., Gonzalez, A., & Synovec, C. E. (2020). The importance of health management and maintenance occupations while homeless: A case study. *Work, 65*(2), 297–301. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-203081>