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Train to Move: A Sensory Approach to Functional Fitness to Promote Movement and Play in Youth

Eboni Rowe; Lisa Griggs-Stapleton, PhD, OTR

BACKGROUND

The processing of sensory events, as a part of everyday life, is suggested to have a significant impact on human experience and behavior (Botterburg & Warreyn, 2016). Regulated sensory systems that are functioning properly contribute to significant outcomes in social-emotional, physical and motor, communication, self-care, cognitive, and adaptive skills development and maintenance (AOTA, n.d.). Through use of sensory-based therapy children can learn to modulate and regulate sensory information, which will allow for improved functional capabilities and motor function (Shamsoddini, 2010).

PROBLEM

A high proportion of children and adolescents in the United States are physically inactive (Mitchell, 2019).

PURPOSE

To explore use of sensory-based approaches to functional fitness.

Outcome objectives:

(a) develop a program to be implemented with use of sensory integration to aid in positive outcomes for child development and functional behaviors.

(b) implement a program for functional fitness that is fun, enjoyable and offers a variety of developmentally appropriate activities.

Methods

Literature Review

- Reviewed literature supporting use of sensory based approaches to support movement and play of youth

Needs Assessment

- Participants consisted of youth, parents and faculty of the YMCA fitness center to gather data for program development.

Data Collection

- Use of surveys, informal interviews and site observations to identify the needs of the program

Deliverables

Deliverable	Description
Staff Training	Educated current and incoming staff about basics of occupational therapy and sensory processing
Train to Move Workshop	Provided youth and faculty with various approaches and resources to sensory based functional fitness
Train to Move Guide	Informational guide with sensory activity ideas to support health and wellness of youth

Program

General Program Goals

- To develop a fun and engaging program with a sensory-based approach to functional fitness to promote movement and play in youth.
- To support health and wellness of youth through sensory based approaches.
- To provide guidance to caregivers as to how to implement sensory-based activities to increase physical activity in youth.
- Advocate for occupational therapy in community based programs

Theoretical Framework

- Sensory Integrative Theory

Workshop Outline

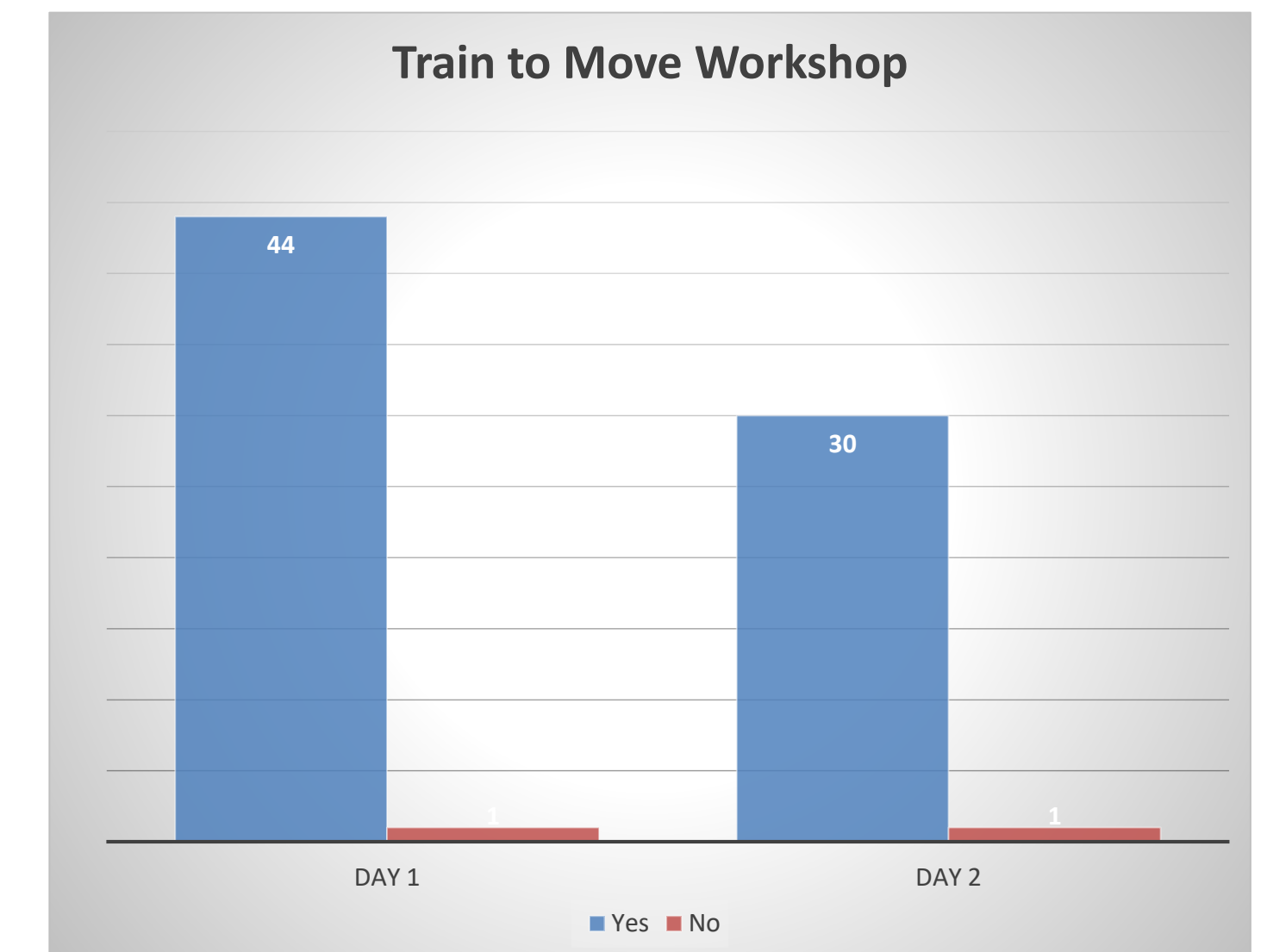
Day 1: 45 Participants

Topic	Activity
Guidelines and Rules	Safety and activity instructions, questions and answers
Warm-Up	Music, use of physio ball guided exercises
Functional Fitness	Parachute Popcorn (vigorous activity with use of a rainbow parachute)
Cool-Down	Calming music, slower-paced parachute game
Debriefing	Discussion about Occupational Therapy and sensory, demonstration and showing of sensory items, question and answer, survey healthy snack

Day 2: 31 Participants

Guidelines and Rules	Safety and activity instructions, questions and answers
Warm-Up	Body Beats (use of body parts to create sound and rhythm)
Functional Fitness	
Cool-Down	Calming music, deep breathing techniques with use of a cotton ball
Debriefing	Question and answers, survey, healthy snack

Youth Survey:



Discussion

- Helped to discover current needs of the YMCA
- Program based on common themes discovered with the needs assessment.
- Use of sensory approaches to increase physical activity in youth
- Establishment of functional fitness programs in community centers



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References

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