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## An Occupational Therapy Approach to Promote Body Positivity in Middle School Aged Youth

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# An OT Approach to Promote Body Positivity in Middle School Aged Youth

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## BACKGROUND

Middle school aged children are in a vulnerable developmental period that pose challenges toward maintaining a positive body image (Maes et al., 2021). Consequently, body image can be a mental health concern that can lead to a decrease in occupational performance in education, leisure, and social participation (Bazyk, 2011; Tort-Nasarre et al., 2021). Occupational therapists (OTs) have the potential to provide mental health services to address body image in school and community settings that promote skills needed for meaningful participation in education, leisure, and socializing (Bazyk, 2011).

## PROBLEM

School settings currently do not have the appropriate resources or mental health initiatives to address occupational performance problems related to body image with middle school aged youth.

## PURPOSE

To demonstrate OT's value in promoting body positivity for increased performance in education, leisure, and social participation in school and community settings.

### Objectives

1. Observe mental health services offered by schools and community organizations.
2. Assess relevance of addressing body image within middle school aged youth.
3. Understand intervention approaches relevant to body image and OT.

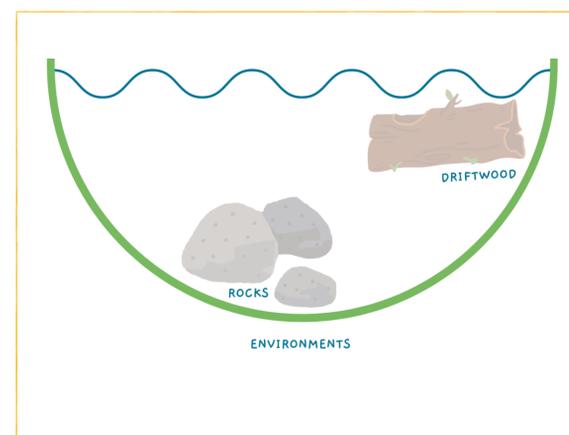
## METHODS

### Literature Review

- Factors that contribute to the development of body image.
- Impact of body image on occupational performance.
- Role of OT in mental health promotion.
- Treatment approaches in school-based and community settings.

### Needs Assessment

The use of site observations, staff surveys, and kawa models with participants were performed to obtain knowledge of perceptions and culture revolving body image in school and community settings. Information gained from the assessments were organized through a thematic analysis in order to guide and inform program development.



### Models and Theoretical Frameworks

- Person, Environment, and Occupation (PEO) Model
- Public Health Model (Tier 1)
- Social Emotional Learning Theory
- Sensory Integration Theory

## PROGRAM

### Program Objectives

1. Design an occupation-based body positivity program for middle school aged children in school and community settings.
2. Support teachers and school/community staff in promoting body positivity through education and training.
3. Promote occupational performance in middle school aged children influenced by body image perceptions.

### Program Structure

- Focus group for body image concepts
- Self reflection activity
- Classroom inclusion activity
- Occupation and strength-based activity
- Interoception activity
- Emotional regulation activity

### Materials for Sustainability

- Classroom handout
- Program manual with lesson plans
- Staff training

### Capstone Sites

- Sunrise Middle School, San Jose, CA
- Boys and Girls Club of Silicon Valley



## IMPLICATIONS FOR OT

The promotion of body positivity aims to prevent the occurrence of more serious problems that may impact occupational performance. School mental health initiatives can recognize how body image can be implemented as tier 1 interventions to promote performance in education, leisure, and social participation with an entire student body. This capstone experience provides insight for OTs to use when addressing body image in middle school aged youth.

## REFERENCES & MANUAL



References



Manual

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