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Employment and Mental Matters Amongst Formerly Incarcerated Women

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Employment and Mental Matters Amongst Formerly Incarcerated Women

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BACKGROUND

The United States is known to have the **highest** population of individuals incarcerated (Munoz et al., 2016). Antenangeli & Durose (2021) found **66%** of formerly incarcerated individuals were arrested within 3 years of release and **82%** within 10 years of being released. Females who commit crimes are more likely to suffer from mental health disorders, putting them in the group at highest risk for recidivism (Ashley et al., 2003).

PROBLEM

Occupational therapists are not included in reentry programs to combat recidivism.

PURPOSE

To implement a program through an OT lens that provide mental health and employment preparation resources for individuals who were formerly incarcerated to address recidivism.

Project objectives:

1. Conduct a needs assessment
2. Develop a program manual/resource guide
3. Provide handouts and resources
4. Create, administer, and analyze data from pre and post program surveys

Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Rosalind Rayford, LSW & the participants of this program.

*This project involves human subjects but has not been reviewed by the IRB.

METHODS

Setting: LipGloss for Love

Population: Formerly Incarcerated Women

Participants

- 5 respondents to the pre-survey
- 3 respondents to the post-survey

Needs Assessment

- Observation of site and population served
- Pre-survey administered to participants

Program Delivery

- One on One Zoom meetings
- Community Engagement Events

Theoretical Framework

Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) model

PROGRAM

General Program Goals

1. Produce resumes in preparation for employment
2. Prepare participant for interviews
3. Provide healthy coping techniques for stress management
4. Promote occupational engagement in work and health management (mental health)
5. Discover how occupational therapy can help formerly incarcerated women
6. Address recidivism through an OT lens

One on One Zoom Meetings

1. Mock Interview
2. Resume Building

Resource Guide Topics

1. Mental Health Techniques
2. Community Resources
3. Resume Building Tips
4. Resume Building Websites
5. Mock Interview Questions

Program Manual/Resource Guide



Conclusions / Future Directions

Participants reported to be more confident when seeking employment after the program and deemed the program manual/resource guide beneficial.

Strengths

- Flexibility
- Manageable Sample Size

Weaknesses

- Small Sample Size
- Only Female participants
- Shift from 5 to 3 participants

Limitations

- Subjective feedback
- Shift to female only participants
- Language Barrier

Future Directions

- Expansion of this program to address additional barriers
- Conduct more research on OTs working with the formerly incarcerated
- Conduct more research on OT interventions benefiting formerly incarcerated individuals

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