OTH 605: Mental Health and Occupational Performance

Assignment #5

Community Based Program: South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM)

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<http://blogs.chatham.edu/communitybasedprogram/>

1. **Needs Assessment**

*Strategies used for Needs Assessment*

Our Needs Assessment was completed through informal conversational interviewing with SHIM administrators, and after speaking with members of the community. Questions of the Needs Assessment were related to pressing topics such as mental health, occupational deprivation, home life, resource accessibility, and current life roles. Conversational interviewing was heavily utilized as a means for interviews due translation or literacy issues, and was the preferred method of information taken from staff. Additionally due to these factors, observations were also focused upon in determining needs within the organization.

The assistant family center site director and community translator were extremely helpful and were able to answer a majority of our questions. They offered a tremendous amount of help, support, and contributed greatly when it came to complete our Needs Assessment. A large amount of the information we gathered was through informal interviewing. We found this method of interviewing to be a lot more effective in gaining a better sense of the essence of SHIM. This method also allowed for conversation to drift a bit more freely and we were able to have questions answered that we would have originally never thought to ask. Conversations topics included:

* The South Hills (Prospect Park) community and residents
  + Problems within the community
  + Living conditions
  + Potential employment opportunities
  + Educational opportunities
  + Mental health status pertaining to:
    - PTSD
    - Anxiety
    - Depression
* SHIM’s capacity
* Employee burnout
* SHIM’s facility and environment it facilitates
* SHIM’s inclusiveness
* Transportation methods
* US born privileges that are not realized
* Cultural appropriation
* Acculturation
* Information about the various realms of support offered
* Questions pertaining to the OAP specifically

While we were able to gain a lot of valuable insight from SHIM employees and women’s group members, our biggest obstacle while gathering information was the lack of time we had with the women’s group members. We were given the opportunity to spend one full week to observe many of SHIM’s ongoing programs. During this time, we immersed ourselves in the community gaining valuable information, and learned how great of an impact SHIM has on so many individuals' lives through the various programs they provide. It was challenging to collect data specifically pertaining to our focus, the women’s group population, due to the group’s limited meeting times which were on Fridays, for two hours.

After spending two sessions informally interviewing various members, we contrived four intervention ideas to pursue that would be most advantageous for the group. We then decided that utilizing a “yes” or “no” question asking methodology would be most successful in gathering data within a short span of time. Questions were openly asked, translated, and communicated to the women who would respond with a “yes'' or “no” by a show of hands. Examples of questions asked included:

* Do you experience stress daily?
* Do you think you get enough sleep?
* Do you think you spend enough time on yourself?
* Do you take care of your family?
* Do you receive help taking care of your family?
* Are you able to participate in preferred activities?
* Do you experience any trouble shopping in stores?
* Do you feel like you are able to understand most English on signs and labels you see in the community?
* Do you feel confident in your understanding of English?

We utilized the information gathered from a collaborative approach of structured questions, informal interviews with staff and women’s group members to decide where occupational therapy services would be the most beneficial.

*Description of individuals/groups who contributed to the Needs Assessment:*Persons interviewed included:

* Assistant Family Center Site Director
* Community Counselor
* Translators

The assistant family center site director oversees all of SHIM’s family related programs. This person plays a critical role taking action and ensuring the women’s group needs are met. The assistant family center site director was able to provide us with information about the background of some of the women, their identified needs, and about the resources SHIM offers to assist them. This person is also our main community site contact, so we also directed many of our logistical questions to her as well.

The community counselor leads the women’s group meetings. This person works face to face with each of the women and offers a wealth of knowledge in regard to the intimate and more complicated details about each woman's life. Further, the role of the community counselor is to provide supportive resources and assists with transporting women to and from group. They also allotted time for us during the first few meetings we attended to ask the women general questions face to face.

The translators each do an excellent job in facilitating conversation during the group sessions. This role is typically shared amongst two individuals, both Nepali speakers and who dwell in Prospect Park, where a majority of SHIM community members live. Because of how immersed they are within the community, they are a vital resource to our Needs Assessment. *Results summarized:*

SHIM is an excellently run organization. SHIM staff members attend to the needs of members by providing various resources and realms of support. Members are welcomed and housed in the nearby community of Prospect Park which inherently makes the SHIM facility accessible. Further, the SHIM facility is comprised of numerous and spacious rooms designated for various groups, classes, and administrative offices. Staff members are knowledgeable about the diverse cultural backgrounds of members allowing them to best serve members appropriately and respectfully. SHIM staff works ardently to provide an inclusive dynamic atmosphere that makes all feel as if they are a part of a community that cares.

The women’s group fosters a hospitable and welcoming environment for women of all races and cultural backgrounds. The director of the group immediately identified a few needs of the group including language barrier challenges, inaccessibility to celebrate cultural holidays and traditions, and varied obstacles preventing members to engage in preferred occupations. Upon discussing these challenges members were open to discussing specific and related needs. Specifically after conversing about factors inhibiting full engagement in occupations, the realization was made that many of the women did not take enough time for themselves and were riddled with stress. The women stated that they are so busy fulfilling caregiver roles that they tend to neglect their own well-being. We determined that the lifestyle as a sole caregiver to children and older family members majorly contributes to stress levels, lack of sleep, and lack of time spent on themselves (self-care, leisure). Language barriers within the community was something that was also identified as a need. While we cannot teach formal English classes, we came up with alternative ways to enhance English proficiency within the context of our implementations. The use of English during these sessions holds the potential of helping the women learn some vocabulary terms within realms surrounding stress, sleep, leisure, grocery shopping, and cooking. These realizations allowed us to come to multiple conclusions as to how skilled occupational therapy services could help them achieve a better overall health and well-being.

*Assessment restrictions:*

Many women identified that previous occupations they had participated before arriving in the United States included horticulture and agriculture and celebrating and participating in cultural holidays and traditions. While these needs are pressing and could contribute to increased quality of life, the resources needed to implement these interventions were unattainable due to funding, space limitations (field for agriculture), lack of necessary resources (livestock, ability to provide formal English classes), and conflicting attitudes regarding acceptance of neighboring communities outside of the SHIM network.

**B.** **Overall** **Community Based Program Description & Justification**

The focus of the programs implemented for the SHIM’s women’s group was determined by their identified needs which was determined through a thorough Needs Assessment. Areas identified included stress management , sleep hygiene, self-care education, community integration, and English acquisition. SHIM’s mission is to operate as an organization that stands for creating an environment to help support community members through meeting their basic needs and becoming self-sufficient (South Hills Interfaith Movement, 2019). We found that the needs of the women’s group coincided closely with the values SHIM possesses as an organization.

We organized a detailed SWOT analysis of SHIM, consisting of the organization’s perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Conclusions of each component of the SWOT may be referred to below:

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| Internal Strengths   * *Location*: Near Prospect Park (where many members reside) * Environment: Facility housed in an old school consisting of many large classrooms, an outdoor playground for children, a gym for events, kitchen, and has a large open parking lot to accommodate many members, visitors, and staff * *Educated Staff*: Nearly all staff members have educational backgrounds within realms including linguistics, family development, multicultural development, youth development, social work, and so on. Other staff members are either from AmeriCorps, ISAC (another organization that provides employees who work specifically with immigrants and refugees), and members from the Prospect Park community * *Affordability*: All programs are free for all members and non-members * *Inclusivity:* While there are a large population of Bhutanese ad Nepali members, SHIM’s resources are also open to people of other backgrounds, including American citizens | Internal Weaknesses   * *Amount of Staff:* Many employees fulfill multiple roles, which could lead to job burnout * *Transportation*: While many members reside in Prospect Park, many also do not and experience difficulty getting to SHIM. SHIM does provide transportation services, but it is not always regular. * *Meeting times*: Many women report that they very much look forward to their time spent together on Fridays; however, if there is a holiday or if the Community Counselor is unable to run the meeting, women cannot get together. They are encouraged to meet separately if the Community Counselor is unable to head the meeting, but the women do not typically meet if this is the case. |

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| External Opportunities   * *Desire for Community Integration*: Part of SHIM’s mission is to integrate members into the surrounding community. There could be a push to do more outings and coordinate more events within community settings outside SHIM * *Well-Established Community*: Prospect Park is home to many individuals and families that utilize SHIM’s services and spread the word about SHIM and what is has to offer * *Grants*: SHIM’s excellent reputation and multitude of projects and programs make the organization an excellent candidate for grants that focus on refugee and immigrant population, supporting inclusiveness, promoting members becoming productive members of society, and advocating for themselves to build a strong, surrounding community | External Threats   * *Mental Health*: Many members have experienced copious amounts of stress and trauma caused by displacement, loss, and hardship which results in mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. * *Word of Mouth*: While SHIM has an excellent reputation, it has primarily been spread through word of mouth. Because of this, it is very likely that when new populations of people come to Pittsburgh, they do not hear about and may be unaware of SHIM. * *Employee Burnout*: The emotional, physical, and mental demands that come along within each employee position within SHIM may have potential adverse effects, including the longevity of some employee’s time spent working for SHIM |

**C.** **Implementation Plan & Reflection**

A total of four protocols were implemented at the SHIM facility. All protocol implementations were directly based on the needs of the community members or needs indicated by the SHIM staff members. Three of the protocols were group based in which interventions were directly implemented to participating community members. The fourth intervention was a population based approach. This approach, unlike a group approach, is not done in the presence of group members, but rather acts alone as a resource to be carried through by staff members. Group based interventions were guided through a carefully selected community based methodology such as Cole’s 7 steps or Lifestyle Redesign stages. Our population based approach was structured using the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF). Protocols for each implementation and reflection articles can be found under the website subheadings labeled: “Implementation #”.

**D. Analysis of Costs & Benefits**

*Financial implications:*

A detailed spreadsheet that delineates the cost to implement each of the four sessions was formed and available as an attachment to this document.

*Program benefits:*

Our first intervention was conveniently inexpensive. SHIM provided nearly all required equipment and materials which provided built in components of feasibility and sustainability for the protocol. During this session, topics discussed were also identified as topics that members wanted to better understand. The costliest potion included the use of essential oils and sound machine; however, members were introduced to a free white noise app accessible to them to utilize instead of a costly sound machine. The continual completion of educational sessions geared toward relieving stress is a low cost intervention that allows members to further learn about stress, ways to manage it, and has the potential to increase their overall quality of life, independence, and physical health.

The second intervention, unlike the first, required more resources and supplies. While it was close to cost free to implement, it would not be possible without the generosity of neighboring communities (SHIM and Non-SHIM members) regularly offer donations. Donations that facilitated this intervention included multiple sewing machines, fabric, thread, rice, and essential oils . This intervention also allowed women to explore and participate in an available leisure activity offered through SHIM. Additionally, women contribute to the donation pile for the sewing room to give back benefiting themselves and others. Women sew together and create handbags to sell at an annual craft fair and have an opportunity to give back to SHIM and to also make something for themselves.

Our third intervention was close to cost free. This is a physical binder SHIM staff may keep and continually use and sustain. The costliest part of the third intervention was the transportation and cost of translators. However, the furthest grocery store visited was only 2 miles away and the utilization of “Google Translate” may also save on costs. It may also beneficial for SHIM to continue to build the grocery binder. Future additions of implementing more local stores, items, and languages represented at SHIM would be beneficial in serving diverse populations. The continual utilization of the grocery binder will contribute to increasing overall confidence and members' feelings of accomplishments.

The fourth intervention was the costliest due to having to purchase ingredients. While the intervention was relatively more costly, the women appeared to enjoy this specific intervention the most. The nature of the session helped to facilitate social participation of all members of the group, which is one of the main goals of the women’s group. The supportive atmosphere of the environment contributed in helping teach some simple English vocabulary words pertaining to cooking and common household kitchen items, which was identified in the Needs Assessment as a goal to achieve. Even though the intervention’s sole focus was not to provide an English lesson, learning vocabulary in context appeared to form a more memorable connection to retain information. This session could easily be implemented in the future and would be appreciated by the women as it was apparent in helping them learn English in a meaningful way.

*Risks & uncertainties:*

Financial Risks

One possible financial risk may be the exposure of SHIM’s finances through the grant application processes. It may be disadvantageous for such sensitive information to be released to the public. While most sessions that were implemented were low-cost, SHIM may require additional supplies to expand or increase the frequency of delivery of interventions requiring grant applications to help offset costs. Liability may also be a financial factor. If an adverse event occurs to a member during a session such as personal or emotional injury, SHIM’s insurance may be required to cover any related costs. Other than these two points, the financial risks surrounding the implementation of these interventions is low. Most items were either low costing or provided by donations. Please refer to financial implication sheet for more specific costs of each session.

Non-Financial Risks

Bodily harm is a possibility during sessions two and four. During session two, bodily harm may occur during the sewing activity. Because of this reality, it is recommended that only 1-2 women who do not know how to sew are allowed on the machines. It is also recommended that there be a single person who knows how to sew to supervise those who are novice sewers, to ensure maximum safety. During session four, women may be at risk for kitchen-related accidents. The session included the utilization of knives, boiling water, and the stove top. It is pertinent that women are all advised to be wary of these items and to practice caution while working with these items.

*Identification of potential grant sources****:***

The Ford Foundation stands for addressing social inequalities and taking a stand to provide people with an opportunity and a voice throughout the United States and the United Kingdom. The Ford Foundation is also specifically interested in providing support to those who have experienced discrimination due to their cultural being and who lack access to government resources (Ford Foundation, 2019). SHIM’s mission is to meet people where they are and help them integrate into a thriving community that supports and pushes each individual to be a self-sufficient and fulfilled community member (SHIM, 2019). These coinciding ideals make SHIM a perfect candidate and recipient of the Ford Foundation’s grant. The application process is a simple one that consists of answering only two questions about the organization’s “ideas” or what the grant would be put toward. The questions are as follows:

1. How would you describe your idea to someone in 30 seconds of less? (In 50 words or less)
2. Describe your idea. (In 250 words or less)

(Ford Foundation, 2019)

The application then follows up by requesting basic demographic information, then prompts the user to submit. Applicants can expect to hear back within 45 days. The application is also always open, making it convenient for organizations to apply. A link to the application is provided below:

<https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/our-grants/idea-submission/>

The Pittsburgh Foundation stands for building up the greater Pittsburgh community by helping local communities in need to help improve residents’ quality of life. According to the Pittsburgh Foundation as of 2019, funding priorities include promoting “self-sufficient individuals and families, healthy communities, vibrant democracy, and community projects”. The characteristics of SHIM, as previously mentioned, and what they work towards on a daily basis is a perfect fit for what type of organization the Pittsburgh Foundation is looking to support. Grant qualifications include the organization being located within Allegheny County or provide service to residents’ in Allegheny County and for the to be designated as a 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS (The Pittsburgh Foundation, 2019). If the organization is qualified, they must then create an organizational profile through the information provided on the Pittsburgh Foundation’s website and then upload a letter of inquiry. Proceeding this, a review will be made on the organization's submissions. If the Pittsburgh Foundation chooses to accept them, an invitation would then be sent out to fill out a formal application for the grant. Currently, deadlines for applications are designated during each season; however, specific dates are recorded as “TBD” (The Pittsburgh Foundation, 2019). According to the Pittsburgh Foundation’s (2019) website, dates are subjected to change and therefore, presumably updated. Contact information for the Pittsburgh Foundation is listed below:

Address: 5 PPG Place, Suite 250, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-5414

Phone: 412-391-5122

(The Pittsburgh Foundation, 2019)

**E.** **Program Evaluation**

*Program Desirability:*

The information pertaining to program desirability was attained through informal conversational interviewing at our final day at SHIM. The SHIM staff were heavily involved in the process in choosing administering interventions to the women's support group. Due to this transparency and team-based approach, the perceptions and opinions of SHIM staff were positive and supportive. Each implementation was received with high praise. Statements from staff never alluded to discontinuing a specific intervention for any reason. In fact, due to the successful efforts and implementations from Chatham students, SHIM expressed a desire for a continued collaboration with the Chatham University Occupational Therapy program.

*Program Sustainability:*

SHIM staff perceived all programs to have elements of sustainability within them. Due to the nature of the staff’s backgrounds in social work and other service related fields, a major focus of many of the interventions regarding the topic of stress management is not a nuance term. Staff will be able to sustain the educational portions relating to stress management and its dynamics in relation to leisure participation, sleep, time management, and community support. The cooking may be the most complex intervention to sustain. This is due to time restraints of using non-working hours to grocery shop and extra coordination of bringing necessary items that may not be available in the SHIM kitchen. The grocery binder in its electronic form is sustainable in offering new community members or members with Non-English proficiency a portable option to use inside the chosen grocery stores.

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