Are the Friends Ready for Independence?
Exploring the efficacy of independent living skill training received at Friends Life Community.

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Mission of Friends Life Community

The mission of Friends Life Community (FLC) is “to create an opportunity for teenagers and adults with disabilities to develop socially, grow personally, and enjoy community as they experience life together.”

Identified Needs of the Agency

1. Many friends show much more independence in performance of activities of daily living (ADLs) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) at Friends Life than they do at home.
2. There is no evidence as to why this breakdown occurs (i.e. knowledge, performance, motivation).
3. Parents have reported to FLC management concerns about their ability to support their children in performing ADLs at home.

Goals of the Experiential Component

- Examine existing evidence on development of independent living skills.
- Develop a training curriculum for caregivers of the friends.
- Create and administer a caregiver survey on their opinion and observations of the friends independent living skills.
- Explore the individual goals of the friends, including their self-identified strengths and challenges and wants and needs regarding programming.
- Develop a report on findings from caregiver surveys and friend interviews for FLC staff.
- Advocate for the occupational potential, occupational performance and occupational engagement of the friends through presentation of caregiver training.

Literature Review

- Development of independent living skills provides individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) with opportunities to practice independence in other areas of life and promotes development of self confidence (Providence Place, 2015).
- Independent living skill development increases self determination (Wehmeyer, 1997).
- Individuals with IDD who display self determination experience a higher quality of life as opposed to those who lack this sort of independence (Diffenbach, 2012).
- Mastering independent living skills can lead to increased self-advocacy (Wehmeyer, 1997).
- Increased self advocacy can improve an individual’s leadership capabilities and allow caregivers and educators to better meet the individual’s needs (Ryan & Griffiths, 2015).

Outcomes

Independent Living Skills the Friends Excel At

The Observation of Caregivers:

Independent Living Skills for the Friends to Master

Top Skills Caregivers Desire Friends to Master:

- Dressing
- Using forward and backward chaining
- Counting Money
- Career Skills
- Reading
- Laundry

The Perception of the Friends:

Independent Living Skills:

- Using positive reinforcement
- Counting Money
- Reading
- Laundry
- Career Skills
- Dressing

Results of Caregiver Training

- 88% of the friends interviewed desire to be independent but 76% had difficulty performing independent living tasks due to low motivation.
- 47% of interviewees had difficulty performing independent living tasks due to physical and/or cognitive abilities.
- FLC is planning on adding more cooking classes to their day program curriculum as well as their Life Skills Coaching Program. Caregivers were educated on adaptive equipment to use at home when working on these skills.

So What?

- 100% of attendees reported feeling well equipped and confident in teaching independence in other areas of life and promotes development of self confidence.
- 100% of the friends interviewed desire to be independent but 76% had difficulty performing independent living tasks due to low motivation.
- 47% of interviewees had difficulty performing independent living tasks due to physical and/or cognitive abilities.
- FLC is planning on adding more cooking classes to their day program curriculum as well as their Life Skills Coaching Program. Caregivers were educated on adaptive equipment to use at home when working on these skills.

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