Designing an Inclusive Postsecondary Education Program for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Background Information

Legislation:
- Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 increased funding, financial aid, and developed national standards for students with disabilities to access higher education (VanBergijk & Cavanagh, 2012; Lee, 2009).
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) required students with disabilities to receive transition services to prepare them for postsecondary options (Plotner & Marshall, 2014).

Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE):
- Certificate programs for students aged 18-26 with intellectual/developmental disabilities (ID/DD)
- Educational, career and social experiences through internships, independent living and career classes, and college classes
- Ultimate goal is meaningful employment, increased independent living skills, self-determination and quality of life

Limited access to IPSE programs:
Nationally, there are 1.1 million students and IPSE staff through OT models and lens

Better employment outcomes post-IPSE:
- 17% of individuals with ID/DD are employed (BLS, 2015).
- However, 65% of individuals with ID/DD are employed within one year of graduating from IPSE programs (Grigal et al., 2018).
- Additional outcomes: higher wages, access to benefits, greater independence and economic self-sufficiency, self-determination, community inclusion expanded career options, and increased job satisfaction (Migliore et al., 2009; Butler et al., 2015; Hart et al., 2010; Wehman & Scott, 2013).
- Enhanced quality of life post-IPSE:
- Improved social relationships, employment outcomes, health and wellness, and self-determination (Migliore et al., 2009; Butler et al., 2015; Van Asselt et al., 2015; Foley et al., 2012; Butler et al., 2015; Hart et al., 2010; Wehman et al., 2013; Migliore et al., 2009; Grigal et al., 2018).
- Positive impact on campus community:
- Typical students experience mutual benefit through cognitive diversity and inclusion (May, 2012).
- IPSE programs increase interprofessional collaboration

Agency: Belmont University
- Mission: Belmont University is a student-centered Christian community providing an academically challenging education that empowers men and women of diverse backgrounds to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, compassion, courage and faith.
- Vision: To be a leader among teaching universities, bringing together the best of liberal arts and professional education in a Christian community of learning and service.
- Needs of Agency: enhance diversity and inclusion initiatives, increase access for students with disabilities to attend college, keep up with local universities’ initiatives and best practices to continue to be “Nashville’s University”

Project Overview:
- Developed outline of OT’s role in IPSE and shared with stakeholders within community and Belmont University
- Created BUILD program overview to start an IPSE program at Belmont University or similar university in booklet format
- Developed & modified assessments and documents to support students and IPSE staff through OT models and lens

OT’s Role in IPSE
- Academics: identification & accommodation, professor support
- Adaptive Skills: Family strategies, peer support, self-management, adapting to changing environments & expectations
- Healthy Living Skills: Independent living: living on or off campus & community mobility
- Executive Functioning Skills: Time management, organizational skills & decision making
- Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination: Advocacy, self-advocacy, goal development to achieve goals
- Employment: job seeking, job coaching & job maintenance
- Life Skills: self-care, nutrition & exercise
- Leisure & Social Participation: Exploration of leisure interests, involvement in clubs & social skills groups

BUILD Overview
Mission: BUILD is a student-centered, inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) program for individuals aged 18-26 with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) designed to provide excellent opportunities in education, career development, and social participation within an inclusive, Christian academic setting. BUILD strives to create a community that cultivates self-determination, self-efficacy, and lifelong learning.

Documents and Assessments

The following documents were created to support the delivery of OT services within an IPSE program. Throughout the 2-year program, students would be developing skills related to: employment, independent living, communication, safety, community mobility and access, healthy living, and technology with the ultimate goal of increased independence, meaningful employment and self-actualization through individualized, person-centered support and planning.

Person Centered Planning

Career Exploration and Internship Support

Academic Support and Independent Living

Conclusion & Future Goals

- OTs should be involved in interdisciplinary teams in inclusive postsecondary education programs
- OTs specifically can enhance IPSE programs through assessment and evaluation to guide person centered planning, task analysis, assistive technology, modifications and adaptations to reduce barriers to the physical and social environment and facilitate full participation in academics, employment, and campus community.
- Future goals: disseminate information and resources to other OTs, continue to advocate for the role of OT in IPSE, and enhance programming for young adults with ID/DD.

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References Available Upon Request