Contributions to Empower TN’s mission included:

- “To promote opportunities for people with disabilities to strive for greater independence.”
- A community agency, Empower TN, whose mission is: putting the needs of others before your own. These occurred through collaboration with a community as a means of achieving sustainable, positive change. While service is defined as change where the values, vision, and ethics of individuals are integrated into the culture of a community, accessibility.

Leadership & Service

The Experiential Component of Belmont OTD facilitates self-reflection, self-improvement, and professional development in leadership, service, scholarship, and clinical excellence. The Experiential Component of Belmont OTD facilitates self-reflection, self-improvement, and professional development in leadership, service, scholarship, and clinical excellence.

“Universal Design is the design of all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life”

(Mace, 1999).

Abstract

Background: As baby boomers age and the number of people living independently with disability and chronic illness increases, there is a need for environments that support individuals of all abilities. Structural barriers in the environment may decrease an individual’s function and their ability to participate in the community as desired. UD is not widely used or studied in the United States. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify both user and creator’s knowledge and perceptions on Universal Design and its use in restaurants, hotels, and parks. Methods: A user survey and an architect survey were distributed via Qualtrics to a total of 62 participants. Results and frequency were identified and compared between groups. Results: A combined 22/46 participants had never heard of UD. Users and architects see similar benefits to the use of UD, and both identified lack of education on UD, lack of education on user groups' abilities, and lack of education on architect's knowledge and perceptions on Universal Design and its use in the environment.

Results of the survey indicated the following:

- Both users and creators of environments lack appropriate knowledge of UD
- Creators of environments believe they are building spaces that support all individuals participation, however users report their participation is hindered or completely prevented by the environment
- There is confusion between ADA and UD, and neither is widely understood
- UD should be a part of professional education for architects, builders, hospitality entrepreneurs, engineers, and healthcare professionals

In conclusion, occupational therapists have a role in facilitating collaboration between users and creators to ensure built environments support user participation. Occupational therapists also have a role in providing architects education on diverse user groups and their abilities.

References


Scholarship

Scholarship is a systematic investigation that develops or contributes to generalizable knowledge, made accessible to the public. Scholars have the responsibility to use evidence in professional decision-making and to generate new evidence through research.

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User Reported Most Common Barriers within Restaurants:

- Interior doorways
- Doorways
- Bathroom stalls
- Sinks
- Space in bathroom
- Accessible parking

My personal vision is to begin filling a void where there is a gap in both Universal Design (UD) research and implementation of UD in the United States. To inspire and educate creators and users until UD is widely understood and used at the local, state, and national level, in order to promote participation for all individuals.