Developing a Community Accessibility Program: Access Music City

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Abstract

The purpose of this residency project was to develop and implement the initial phases of the Access Music City program, which aims to increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities in Nashville. This project was completed in collaboration with Empower TN, Middle Tennessee’s Center for Independent Living. Evidence-based research and learning modules related to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) were used to expand knowledge on the needs of individuals with disabilities, environmental accessibility, and ADA regulations. Initial implementation of Access Music City included forming and meeting with an advisory council to solicit feedback on survey utilization, volunteer recruitment opportunities, and participation for individuals with disabilities. Volunteers were recruited from local colleges and community organizations, trained to conduct surveys, and return the results to Empower TN for analysis. This project created an opportunity for Empower TN to collaborate with each restaurant and provide a variety of services to improve their accessibility. To outline the policy and procedure for further development of Access Music City, a handbook was created to facilitate easy, productive growth in the effort to make Nashville accessible for all.

Project Goals

1. Develop advanced knowledge on barriers to accessibility for individuals with disabilities in order to develop clinical excellence and increase scope of practice as a future occupational therapist
2. Expand leadership and professional skills while effectively collaborating with Empower TN towards the development of the Access Music City program
3. Empower individuals with disabilities by educating the community on the accessibility of local restaurants, in order to increase advocacy for this population and promote equal access for all.

Phase 1: Research and Planning

January 6 - February 3, 2016

• Conducted evidence-based research and utilized educational resources to expand knowledge on the needs of individuals with disabilities, environmental accessibility, and ADA regulations
• Collaborated with Empower TN to determine short and long-term goals for Access Music City program, which aims to increase community participation for individuals with disabilities
• Formed and met with an Access Music City advisory council to solicit feedback on survey utilization, volunteer recruitment opportunities, and community business partnerships

Phase 2: Implementation

February 4 - March 1, 2016

• Recruited approximately 25 volunteers from local colleges and community organizations to survey the accessibility-friendliness of local restaurants
• Hosted volunteer-training day to educate volunteers on the goals, policies, and procedures of the Access Music City program
• Showcased Access Music City at the TN Conference for Volunteerism and Service-Learning

Phase 3: Analysis and Sustainability

March 2 - April 20, 2016

• Data analysis to determine each surveyed restaurant’s accessibility rating
• Formed an Access Music City handbook to serve as an outline of progress, policy, and procedure for further program development

Survey Results

Ratings of 26 Nashville restaurants surveyed during Spring 2016, assessing “accessibility-friendliness” for individuals with disabilities.

Survey Questions:

1. Can you comfortably access the bathroom? (Yes/No)
2. Does the bathroom have a public hair dryer? (Yes/No)
3. Are the vanities in the bathrooms long enough for someone using a wheelchair? (Yes/No)
4. Is there a sink on the wall of a bathroom? (Yes/No)
5. Are the sinks in the bathrooms positioned at counter height? (Yes/No)
6. Is the bathroom heated or cooled? (Yes/No)

Volunteer Feedback

"Would love to see this expand into other counties" "Great learning experience" "Helpful training and experience" - AMC Spring 2016 Volunteers

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References