



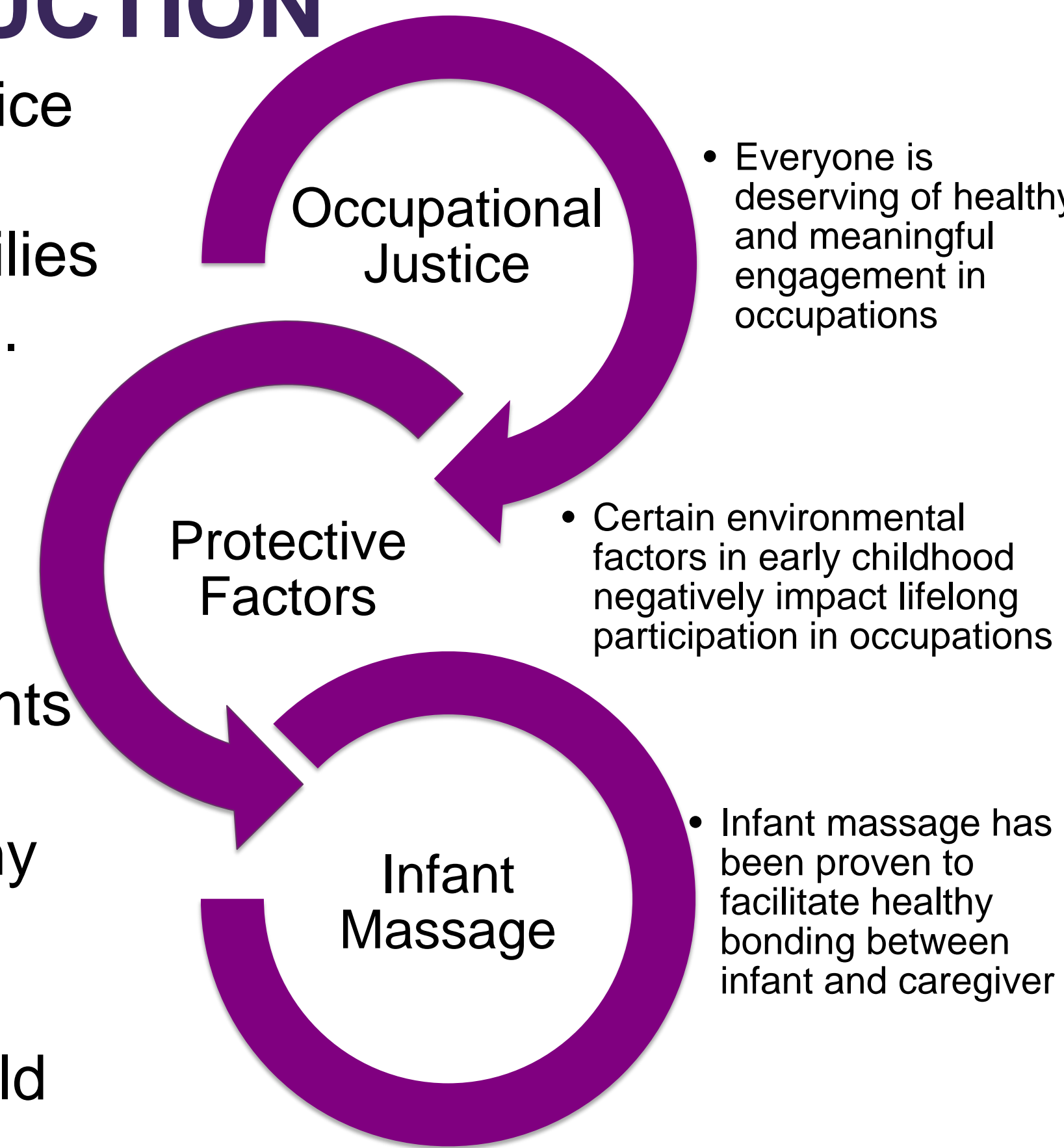
Developing an Infant Massage Program in the Snoqualmie Valley

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INTRODUCTION

- Purpose: To provide a community service to the underserved Snoqualmie Valley (SV) population that would benefit families through promoting infant mental health.
 - Program was developed in collaboration with E. Olson & J. Rosquita of Fall City Children's Therapy (FCCT).
 - The rural environment of SV presents barriers to families in accessing resources for participation in healthy caregiving.
 - Providers in this area have great difficulty reaching families that would most benefit from their services.
- A course on parent instruction of infant massage was identified in the project proposal as the medium through which to address this need.
 - Infant massage is a meaningful co-occupation that benefits the infant, the caregiver, and fosters strong infant-caregiver bonds over the lifespan.
 - Infant massage is a simple, fun to learn skill that can be easily integrated into existing family routines.



SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- Benefits of infant massage for:
 - Caregiver: Decrease in anxiety, stress, and depression. Increase in feelings of self-esteem, maternal confidence, parenting qualities, and emotional well-being.^{1, 2}
 - Infant: Multiple physical and emotional benefits such as higher weight gain, decreased stress levels, increased motor activity, and less time crying.^{3, 4, 5}
 - Infant-Caregiver: Studies show increased eye contact, more smiling of the infant, support of resiliency, and reciprocal interactions that are long standing.^{6, 7}
- Importance of the social aspect within group services:
 - At-risk mothers who attended group interventions had decreased rates of depression and parent helplessness compared to moms who did not attend groups.⁸
 - Mothers who attended weekly support groups scored higher on tests of social capital and mental well-being than those who did not.⁹
 - Mothers with infants in a neonatal intensive care unit reported that peer support was the most important factor in developing their maternal role.¹⁰

PROGRAM EVALUATION

FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES

- Participants reported enjoying learning a new skill and spending time with their babies.
- Likelihood of attending event again was high.
- The educational pieces that families enjoyed were learning the massage strokes and the benefits of infant massage.
- Families were interested in hearing about future programs through FCCT.
- Recommendations were made for a warmer room.
 - Those unable to attend expressed disappointment in missing the class.
 - Reasons for not attending were sick child and unexpected family commitments.

FEEDBACK FROM PROJECT MENTORS

- Faculty adviser affirmed efforts in networking and resource development for the program. Acknowledged difficulty in reaching select population.
- Community mentors were thankful for the piloting of their vision and networking for future projects.



Project group and mentors implementing the infant massage group

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

- Community providers and organizations that offer services to families in the SV area were identified with guidance of the project mentors.
- A list of questions was developed to assess current available resources, barriers to accessing services, and potential success of an infant massage program.
- Interviews were conducted over the phone, through email, and in-person.

ONLINE SEARCH

- Researched available infant massage programs in the SV area.
- Evaluated population served by current programs.
- Identified related services for infant health.



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Barriers	Aspects of program design addressing known barriers
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SV area has minimal public transportation and many families in the area do not own cars. • The MOT project team choose to address this barrier by hosting the event in a central community location that many of the target population may already access for other services.
Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MOT project team offered free childcare for other siblings so that families could attend with their infants without worrying about watching over older siblings at the same time.
Date and Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the lack of public transportation on weekends, the MOT project was planned for a Saturday morning when the majority of potential attendees would not be in school or at work.
Length of Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum was designed to include multiple breaks and flexible start and stop times. • The curriculum was fit into a 2 hour time block so that infants would be able to stay alert between naps for the majority of the program.
Marketing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on advice from interviewees, the program was marketed emphasizing the positive effects of infant massage for infants, and minimally around the positive effects for parenting. • The project was marketed through many mediums including paper flyers, word of mouth from other service providers, community calendars online, and social media.
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MOT project program was designed to include incentives like food, beverages, and a certificate of completion to increase motivation for attendance.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

LESSONS LEARNED

- Vulnerable populations are difficult to reach.
- Despite program design to address identified barriers to attending a community program, circumstances still prevented families who had responded from attending on the day of the event.
 - Reaching people through home visits and teaching at already existing groups may be more successful.

NEXT STEPS

- FCCT connections in the community for future collaborations established.
 - Community clinic at Snoqualmie Valley Alliance Church.
 - Healthy Start home visitor training course on infant massage.
- Development and organization of curriculum, materials, and event.

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