Developing a Sensory Processing Workshop for Rehabilitation Therapists in China

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BACKGROUND

LIH Olivia’s Place is a network of pediatric therapy clinics in China and the pediatric division of LIH Healthcare. The core vision of LIH Healthcare is “to enable all people of China to access high-quality, evidence-based, interdisciplinary rehabilitation services.” However, the majority of rehabilitation therapists in China are educated as OT/PT/SLP/Chinese medicine generalists with only a few OTs who graduated from programs meeting standards recognized by the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT). As rehabilitation advances in China, these rehabilitation therapists need additional education to increase their abilities to deliver high quality services. One area of need identified by therapists at LIH Olivia’s Place is sensory processing (i.e., how the brain receives, interprets, and uses sensations to produce appropriate behaviors). The purpose of this project was to design a sensory processing workshop to equip rehabilitation therapists in China with knowledge to address the sensory needs of their pediatric clients as part of a series of professional development workshops offered by LIH Olivia’s Place.

CONTEXT

Factors Impacting Project

Need for OT Providers in China
• Many unspecialized Chinese-trained rehabilitation therapists
• Fewer providers from WFOT recognized educational programs:
  - Internationally-trained OTs
  - Chinese-trained OTs

LIH Olivia’s Place
• Committed to providing continuing education for therapists
• Established series of educational workshops for therapists
• In need of educational resources for professional development and advocacy

Conditions in China
• Intense sensory exposures (e.g., smoke, pollution, & construction noise) are common in China
• Sensory exposures can aggravate negative behaviors in children
• Parents are seeking services related to management of their children’s behavior

WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT

To complete the project, we:
• Gathered research evidence related to sensory processing
• Conducted a needs assessment consisting of questionnaires, email exchanges, consultations with community mentors
• Reviewed LIH Olivia’s Place online resources
• Developed a five-hour workshop consisting of a 126-slide interactive PowerPoint presentation with presenter notes, supplemental group activities, discussion questions, and handouts

SAMPLE WORKSHOP MATERIALS

PowerPoint
• Theory of sensory processing
• Neuroscience
• Development related to sensory processing
• Evaluation
• Intervention
• Common diagnoses related to sensory processing

Applications
• Case studies
• Discussion questions
• Role playing
• Activity analysis by age group
• Occupational profile

Supplemental Handouts
• Neuroscience review
• Developmental stages table
• Examples of sensory-based interventions by modality
• Print/online resources
• Activity worksheets

FINAL PRODUCT

FUTURE PLANS

The workshop materials will be:
• Translated into Chinese by a team of medical translators
• Presented by occupational therapists working at LIH Olivia’s Place
• Used as self-study for therapists working at LIH Olivia’s Place
• Shared with other OT educators in China
• Expanded in future international collaborations

REFERENCES