Developing Toolkits for Individualized Profiles and Goal Setting to Promote Self-Regulation and Community Participation with Neurodiverse Adults

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Introduction

3L Place
- Nonprofit organization in Somerville, MA that provides support for adults with autism (ASD) and other neurodiverse populations (Down's syndrome, learning disability, etc)
- Promotes self-determination through life skills training, vocational exploration, community integration, social skills training, and more

Key Terms
- *Neurodiversity:* the idea that people experience and interact with the world in different ways, and that there is no right way of thinking, behaving, or learning (Baumer & Frueh, 2021)
- *Self-determination:* a person's ability to manage their daily lives and make independent choices (Lopez-Garrido, 2021)
- *Self-regulation:* a person's ability to manage their emotions and behavior (Pepperdine University, 2018)
- *Social participation:* activities that involve social interaction with others and that support social interdependence (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020)

Population
Individuals with neurodiversity often experience:
- Trouble communicating their emotions and thoughts (Huang et al., 2017)
- Self-regulation difficulties, which can impact social participation (Dijkhuis et al., 2017)
- Lower feelings of belonging in a community (Dijkhuis et al., 2017)
- Social isolation and social participation difficulties (Amado et al., 2013; Orsmond et al., 2013)

Purpose

The purpose of this capstone project was to create toolkits for 3L Place that staff can use to:
1) *Create individual profiles with each member for members to use to communicate their preferences, needs, learning and communication styles, and self-regulation strategies*

2) *Help members set community participation goals that are important to them.*

Overview of Methods

- Steps taken to create the People Profile and Goal-Setting Toolkits are provided in Methods section
- All guidelines and resources were refined based on feedback from site mentor, faculty mentor, 3L Place staff, and 3L Place members
- One 3L Place staff member acted as main "People Profile Staff" and made profiles with various members
  - Received iterative feedback from this staff member after they met with each member and then made refinements to guidelines based on feedback and suggestions
- Goal-setting toolkit was refined based on staff feedback, but was not tried out as extensively due to time limitations
Toolkit development also informed by active involvement in 3L Place daily programming through:
- Participation in weekly staff meetings
- Taking on roles during daily programming
- Attending a weekly community outing to Davis Square with members

Methods- People Profile Toolkit

1 — **Information Gathering**
Orientation to members and 3L Place daily programming
Learned about member specific self-regulation strategies by asking about this during journaling sessions

2 — **Outline Development**
Collaborated with site and faculty mentors to create People Profile outline topics, which included:
Identities; likes / dislikes; calming strategies; learning / communication styles; community needs

3 — **Resource Development**
Developed visual resources to provide members with options for answers to People Profile questions
Created an individual People Profile to serve as an example (included in QR code at the end of this poster)

4 — **People Profile Creation**
Made People Profiles with 3 members with various communication styles to gather feedback and inform guideline development

5 — **Guideline Development**
Created guidelines for staff to continue People Profile process
Shared guidelines with one staff member who then observed creation of a People Profile with a member

6 — **Toolkit Refinement**
One staff member created profiles with 8 more members
Debriefed with staff member after each creation to refine guidelines and toolkit based on their experiences

Methods- Goal Setting Toolkit

1 — **Guideline Development**
Collaborated with site and faculty mentors to create goal-setting guidelines and discuss resources

2 — **Worksheet Development**
Created worksheets for staff to fill out with members during goal-setting and check-ins
Created a "weekly accountability sheet" for members to track goal progress

3 — **Resource Development**
Developed visual resources with options of possible community participation goals, supports, and obstacles to help members answer worksheet questions

4 — **Staff Education and Implementation**
Implemented goal-setting process with 1 staff and 2 members
Received feedback from staff that 3L Place would benefit from a shorter, more accessible version of process

5 — **Guideline and Resource Development- Shorter Version**
Created and refined a shorter goal-setting process (in addition to longer version) to accommodate for learning styles of members and time constraints of staff

6 — **Implementation and Refinement**
Gathered feedback from site mentor after they implemented the shorter goal-setting process with 1 member
Refined toolkit and presented everything to staff

Toolkit Descriptions and Key Feedback

| Resource Created	Contents	Feedback
People Profile Toolkit	- Infographic highlighting process and toolkit contents - Guidelines for staff to repeat process - Visual resource to support members - Outlines to create profiles "This Calms Me" community tool (wallet card) that reflects individual self-regulation strategies for the community	Staff feedback: - Creating profiles with members allows them time and space to reflect on how they want to be seen in their community - Toolkit is a natural supplement to 3L place onboarding process for new members
Goal-Setting Toolkit	- Infographic highlighting process and toolkit contents - Guidelines for staff to repeat both the longer and shorter goal-setting processes - Worksheets for initial goal-setting procedures (long and short versions) - Weekly accountability sheet to track progress - Worksheets for goal progress check-ins (long and short versions) - Outlines for members to take home that reinforce goal and strategies	Staff feedback: - Toolkit offers more opportunity for participation in goal setting processes - Goal setting toolkit may need more modifications to address needs of nonverbal members - Staff looks forward to continuing to grow with the toolkit and refine it out over time

Discussion

Usability
3L Place staff created People Profiles with most members using this toolkit
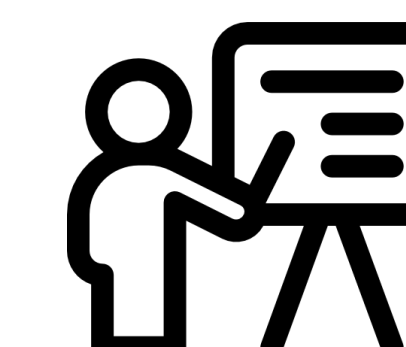
Neurodiverse minds benefit from accessible tools for self-expression, as they often have trouble communicating emotions (Huang et al., 2017)
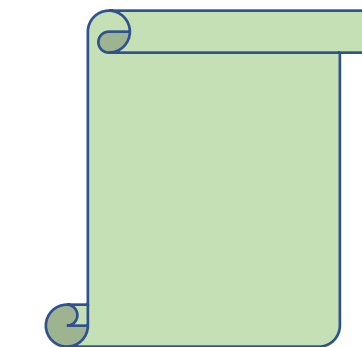
3L Place members used the People Profiles to introduce themselves in the community and found it helpful
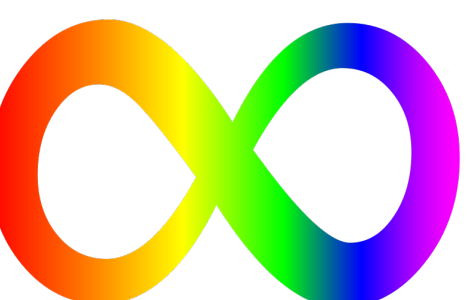
Working with neurodiverse individuals is emotionally, intellectually, and interpersonally rewarding

Limitations:
This capstone project occurred during a busy time as 3L Place transitioned to in-person programming following COVID-19. Thus, the goal-setting toolkit was not tried out as in depth as the People Profiles toolkit.

Future Directions

People Profiles
-3L Place staff will continue to make people profiles with new members and modify process over time if necessary
-Staff state they will be using the profiles to advocate for funding from nonprofit organizations

Goal Setting
-Usability of goal-setting procedures was not evaluated as extensively as anticipated, so staff may need to continue to make modifications to reach more members

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People Profile Example

References