Student Research Posters  

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Outcomes of Project-Based Therapy in Individuals with Autism

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INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
The number of adults with ASD is rapidly increasing, and there are limited resources available for this population (Bishop-Fitzpatrick, Minshew & Eack, 2013; Gelbar, Smith, & Reichow, 2014). Thus, there is a growing need for programs/interventions that improve adaptive behaviors necessary for employment in adults with ASD.

Autistry Studios
- Pre-vocational, project-based therapy program for ASD in San Rafael, CA
- Focuses on acquiring technical and social skills through hands-on projects
- Weekly 4-hour sessions
- 1:1 mentoring with clients and typically developing peers

BRIEF ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR SCALE (BABS)
- The BABS measures the improvement of adaptive behaviors in Autistry clients, specifically in the domains of executive functioning (EF), socialization (SOC), and self-regulation (SR).
- The BABS quantitatively tracks Level of Assistance (High (LoAHigh), and Level of Assistance Low (LoALow), frequency (FRQ), and Total Scores of the three domains.
- Each item consists of two Likert scales that capture the frequency and level of assistance of participants’ adaptive behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Level of Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Minimum Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Minimum Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Moderate Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Moderate Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost</td>
<td>High Level of Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>High Level of Assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Client manages frustration well.

Client keeps comfortable distance between self and others.

Client remains on task while working on his/her project.

RESULTS
- Total scores for LoALow and LoAHigh improved significantly between weeks 1 and 9.
- FRQ Total and domain scores did not change across weeks.
- LoAHigh scores for EF and SOC improved significantly between weeks 1 and 9.
- SR scores did not change across weeks.
- Large effect size across all domains

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REFERENCES

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to measure the progress of adaptive behaviors of individuals diagnosed with ASD enrolled in Autistry’s program.

DESIGN & METHODS
Design
- Exploratory prospective cohort design
- The Brief Adaptive Behavior Scale (BABS) was administered to clients by peer mentors following each session over the course of nine treatment sessions.

Participants
- 11 individuals with ASD enrolled in Autistry’s project-based therapy program

Measure
- The BABS measure of adaptive behaviors was created for this study and informed by The Vineland-II and the BRIEF-II.

CONCLUSION
- Participation in Autistry Studios effectively improves adaptive behaviors in individuals with ASD.
- The BABS is a sensitive measure and captures subtle changes in adaptive behaviors. The BABS is particularly sensitive to highest and lowest levels of assistance.
- The BABS is a novel assessment and must be interpreted with caution. Future research is necessary to explore the validity and reliability of the BABS.