



A Win-Win: University and Supported Housing Collaboration

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Objectives

- 1) State how occupational therapy services facilitate the success of individuals living in supported housing
- 2) Identify each step of the implementation process for starting a university and government-supported housing collaboration to provide occupational therapy services
- 3) Identify the strengths and challenges of collaboration with government-supported housing

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Community Partnership



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Types of Supported Housing



Homeless Shelters

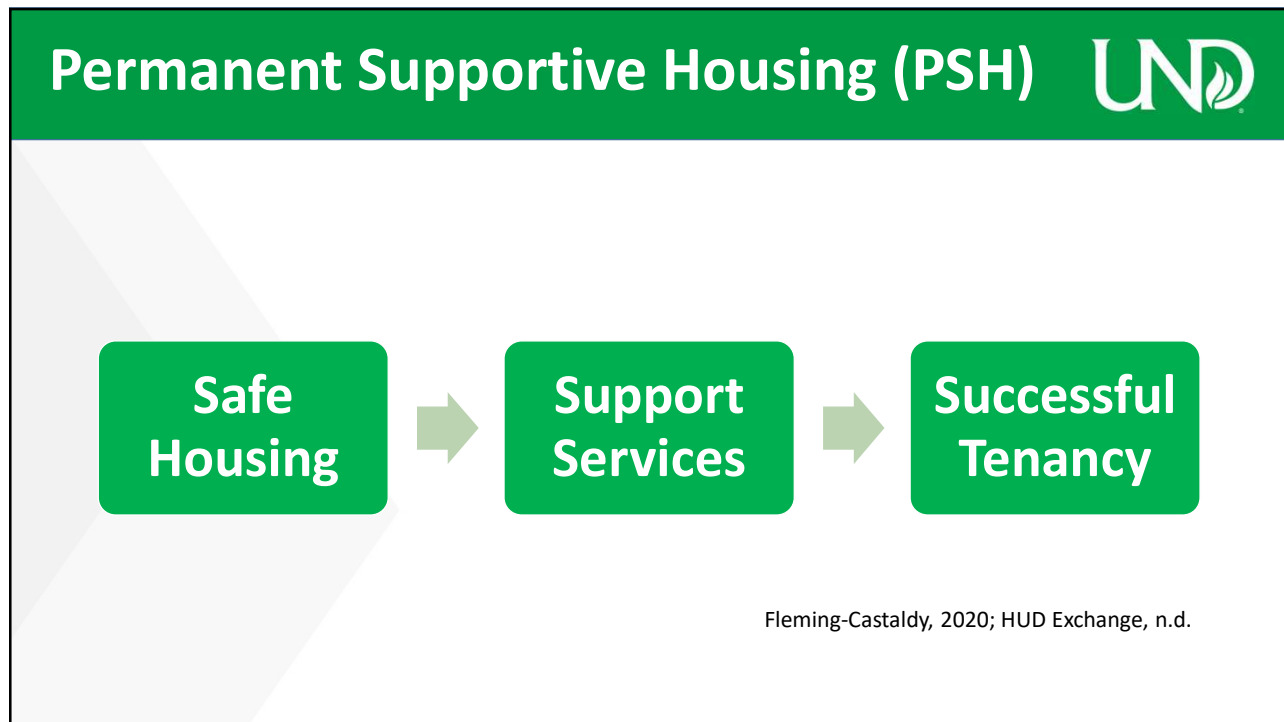
- Temporary, safe housing- one night to 30 days
- Policies vary regarding check-in/out times, alcohol/substance use
- Designated building vs. repurposed spaces

Transitional Housing

- Safe, temporary housing for up to 2 years
- May require participation in job training, education programs, be employed or participate in recovery programs to address substance use or mental illness

Helfrich & Synovec, 2019; Pitts, 2019

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Demographics

- In 2023, 653,000 people were experiencing homelessness (de Sousa et al., 2023)
- 5.2 million American households use rental assistance (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022)
- 69% using rental assistance are seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2022)
- 30%-60% residing in government-supported housing have a mental illness (Helfrich & Synovec, 2019)
- 50% to 80% have co-occurring substance misuse disorder and trauma histories (Helfrich & Synovec, 2019)

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Occupational Therapy Services



Direct Services (Individual and Group Settings)

- Evaluation, goal setting, intervention
- Self-care, home management, medication management, budgeting, shopping, cooking, food safety, job skills training, social participation, transportation, community integration, harm reduction

Indirect Services

- Advocacy, Consultant, Program Development

American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2023; Parker & Scaffa, 2020; Synovec & Helfrich, 2019

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Challenges for OT Service Provision



- Shorter hospital stays leading to an increasing need for community-based or outpatient services
- Limited occupational therapy practitioner (OTP) workforce
- Challenges related to reimbursement
- Lack of inclusion of OTPs in the interdisciplinary teams

Faison et al., 2023

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Forming a Vision



- 2018 ACOTE Accreditation Standards
- Decreasing student placements in behavioral and mental health
- Mission of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences
- OT Curriculum Design

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Forming a Vision



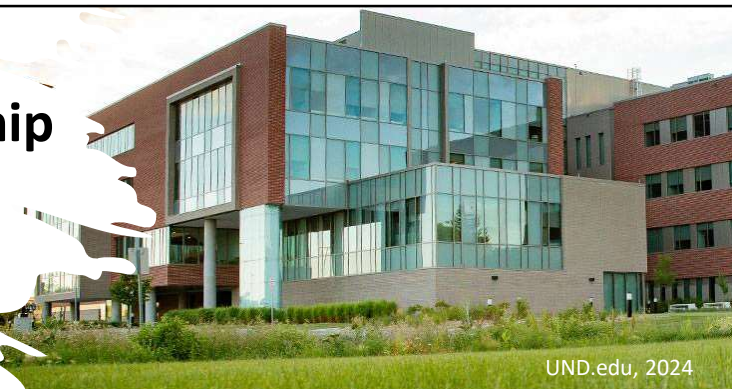
- Position description development
- Searching for a candidate with community ties and program development experience
- Establishing perimeters

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Community Partnership

Primary Aims

- ✓ Build trusting relationships
- ✓ Develop complementary OT services
- ✓ Maintain tenancy
- ✓ Community reintegration
- ✓ Develop student learning opportunities
- ✓ Build capacity for OT services



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OT Needs Assessment



- Understanding the needs of the population
 - Collected via surveys and two focus group sessions
 - OT services were designed based on outcomes
- Support services are offered, but tenants are not required to participate
 - The agency did not have a community-based therapy model
- Maintaining tenancy is not contingent on participation in available services
 - Engaging residents to participate
 - Sustaining participation
 - Will student presence affect tenant participation?

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Establishing Student Learning Experiences

Level I Fieldwork (16 students annually) Objectives

- Explain the mission and vision of the community-based agency and OT(s) role within the agency
- Describe the roles of the interdisciplinary team
- Utilize occupation-based theory to guide the intervention process
- Apply rationale for intervention selection, approach, and type
- Use research evidence to support intervention choice

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Establishing Student Learning Experiences

Level II Fieldwork (8 students annually) Objectives

- Articulate the role(s) of OT in mental health community-based settings
- Demonstrate the guiding principles of practice during the OT process
- Demonstrate skills and competencies using an occupation-based evaluation and intervention
- Demonstrate documentation proficiency and billing practices

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Establishing Student Learning Experiences

Doctoral Experiential Capstone Topics (1 student annually)

- Trauma Impact on Occupational Performance for People Experiencing Homelessness
- Occupational Participation Through the Lens of Harm Reduction

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OT Service Implementation

- OT services through Educator positions and student learning
- Student Session Planning Template
- Coles Seven Steps
- Session review and feedback

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Proposing an OT Position



- Full-time, agency-funded position
- Job Description
- Ongoing educational collaboration
- Collaborative Agreement

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Identification of Next Expansion Site



- Grand Forks Housing Authority
 - Jackson Flats
 - Learning Centers
- Casper, Wyoming
 - Iris Clubhouse

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Strengths and Challenges- University



Strength

- Identifying the need and having the expertise to execute OT program development within a community-based setting to meet the needs of the Housing Authority, the tenants, and student experiential learning

Challenge

- Allocation of University resources with unknown agency, student, and university outcomes.
- Establishing clear boundaries and roles for faculty at the University and the agency

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Strengths and Challenges- GFHA



Strength

- OT can help the tenant transition from dependence on survival to life skills

Challenge

- The agency was unfamiliar with OT's role, knowledge, and competencies and how they could assist.
- The agency was most surprised by OT's scope of service

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Strengths and Challenges- Students

Strengths

- Practice designing and leading groups, which led to increased confidence
- Learned about supportive housing programs and different models that help support community members

Challenges

- Navigating the different personalities and group dynamics leads to a quick learning curve in developing therapeutic use of self
- Initial challenge of managing the workload for planning group sessions, but this resolved with practice

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Collaboration Outcomes


Partnership Outcomes


- New full-time OT position
- Expanded services
- Student experiential learning
- Increased OT visibility and capacity in the community
- Developed a process for billing consultation services
- Expanded role of OT in program development, policy, and education

Tenants Outcomes


- Increased social participation
- Increased leisure exploration and adoption of new, healthy leisure activities
- Improvements in home management tasks
- Improved physical and mental health
- Willingness to participate in OT services
- Tenants feel like they play a role in student's education
- Trust and support leading to request for ongoing OT services

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Summary 

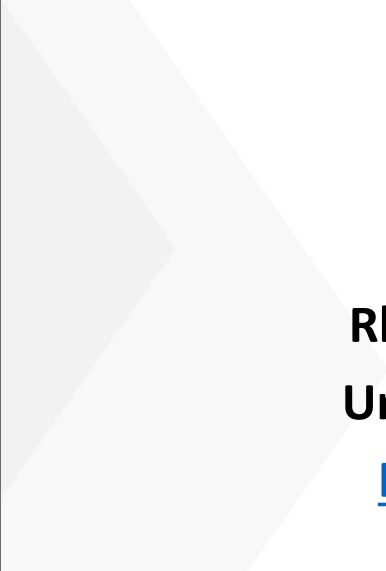


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Thank you! 


Questions

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