Advocacy For Occupational Therapy Within A Local Jail

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Future programs at DCSO:
- Advocating for Occupational Therapy in a non-traditional mental health setting
- Identified inmate needs:
  - Identifying meaningful and purposeful occupations due to occupational deprivation and lack of stimulation
  - Structured activity need for learning stress & anger management skills, coping skills, breathing techniques and mindfulness to reduce anxiety and depression.
- Identified facility needs:
  - Re-entry group programing enhancement through structured activity.
  - Training manual and program design for the new Dogs for Veterans program.
  - Participant screening forms for the Second Chances program.
- Identified facility & inmate needs:
  - Skill development in a variety of areas for successful transition back into the community.
  - Inmates articulated a strong interest and desire to improve their mental health, as well as physical and nutritional health while incarcerated.
- Community resource guide for offenders (support groups, transitional housing, health care, employment etc.)

Current DCSO programs include:
- Healing Journey's (substance and alcohol recovery)
- The Academy (faith-based fellowship program)
- RDAP (residential drug abuse program)
- Second Chances (female offender dog program)
  - The current Second Chances program offers the female offenders a chance to gain valuable skills in areas of personal responsibility, establishing health routines, life skills that can be transferable to vocational skills, reduction in anxiety & depression, emotional regulation and coping skills. While the animals provide unconditional love and support for the offenders, these women are also improving their self-esteem and love that can be further transferred to their children and families.
- Educational programs such as HiSET for inmates to complete their high school diplomas.
- Work release programs
- 12 step programs
- Other classes in health and wellness (yoga, parenting skills, nutrition and other health related issues)

Future programs at DCSO:
- The DCSO is working on a continued partnership with Proverbs 12:10 animal rescue and a new partnership with Operation Stand Down Middle Tennessee to create an inmate dog program for veterans. This new program (beginning Summer 2020) would place Proverbs 12:10 dogs in the hands of inmate handlers to be trained with the needed skills to be suitable emotional support animals (ESA) for retired or disabled military veterans.

Second Chances a DCSO program:
Vision:
"Second Chances is a place for love, healing, and hope. The vision of Second Chances is to provide our female offenders the skills needed to redefine both their lives and the lives of rescued dogs."

About the Nashville DCSO
Currently the DCSO offers a variety of inmate programs that allow offenders to receive the services they need, whether court ordered or voluntarily enrolled. These services aim to combat substance and alcohol disorders, mental illness or simply provide offenders with a different perspective on life.

Current DCSO programs:
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The Academy (faith-based fellowship program)
- Accountability, Diversity, Integrity, and Professionalism.”

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Educational programs such as HiSET, GED, Work release programs, 12 step programs, and other classes in health and wellness (yoga, parenting skills, nutrition and other health related issues).

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Identified Needs of Inmates & Facility
- Advocating for Occupational Therapy in a non-traditional mental health setting
- Identified inmate needs:
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Project Goals
- Develop a component for the DCSO dogs for veterans’ program, while collaborating with involved stakeholders to identify program member needs that contributes to program success and future DCSO programs.
- Identify areas where OT can enhance/promote recovery & quality of life in order to reduce recidivism.
- Collaborate with DCSO professionals and dog handler/trainers to increase awareness and identify areas of need where OT practice can benefit and enhance current programs/groups.
- Communicate with inmates/professionals regarding self-perception of skills/abilities to improve quality of life and successful community reintegration.
- Review current literature on inmate populations (to include veterans), current state dog programs, and best treatment practices for AAI and AAT.

Project Outcomes
- Contribution to DCSO Second Chances & future Dogs for Veterans program:
  - Creation of an 8-week program assignment manual.
  - Development of multiple screening forms for Second Chances program participants and construction of participant handouts.
  - Individual and group therapy sessions.
  - Use of motivational interviewing, role and interest checklists, and the OT quality of life & wellbeing assessment to develop occupational profile and personal goals.
  - Implementation of interactive journaling with weekly topics and mindfulness/deep breathing techniques.
  - Assisted with development of screening forms for the Dogs for Veteran program.
  - Presentation to DCSO staff on the role of OT and need for services within the criminal justice system.
- Personal Outcomes:
  - Development of therapeutic use of self and building strong rapport with a diverse and challenging population.
  - Interprofessional collaboration and professional communication with DCSO and Core Civic staff members across different departments.
  - Deeper understanding and appreciation for the importance of OT within the criminal justice system.

Acknowledgements
This project would not have been possible without the support and encouragement from Dr. Christine Manville, EdD, MEd, OTR/L, Dr. Carmen Colquitt-Turks and Sheila Stinson. Sheila Stinson is the Second Chances program coordinator and offers years of K9 handler experience and over 23 years of correctional work within the local jails, that provided me with a positive hands on experience that has made a lasting impact on me and my career as a future OT. Dr. Manville brings a unique approach to this non-traditional setting and advocacy for OT, through her dedication and passion for serving the mental health community. Her continued guidance and assistance during this project made it a success. To all the DCSO employee’s and Core Civic employees that I have had the opportunity to interact with and collaborate with, thank you for your contribution to my education and experience. This experience would not have been possible without all support and guidance from these individuals and those around me. I am forever grateful for this experience and the new passion I have gained while spending my time at your facility.