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### Increasing Self-Determination Throughout the Transition Process: A Resource Guide for Benton Hall Academy

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# Increasing Self-Determination During the Transition Process: A Resource Guide for Benton Hall Academy



Melanie Vacchiano, OTD/S  
Faculty Mentor: Sue Iliff, PhD, OTR/L  
Expert Mentor: Mary Reynolds, Dean of Academics

## Benton Hall Academy

“We believe in Benton Hall Academy where children who learn differently are educated with compassion, where children who struggle academically and socially are inspired to discover their strengths and maximize their potential, and where children who have been on the outside looking in are invited to belong. The school’s program strives to prepare each student academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally, through individualized instruction, to work to his or her potential and to make a successful transition into the workplace, or into a higher learning experience.”

## Identified Needs of the Agency/Population

Needs assessment was conducted and identified the following needs:

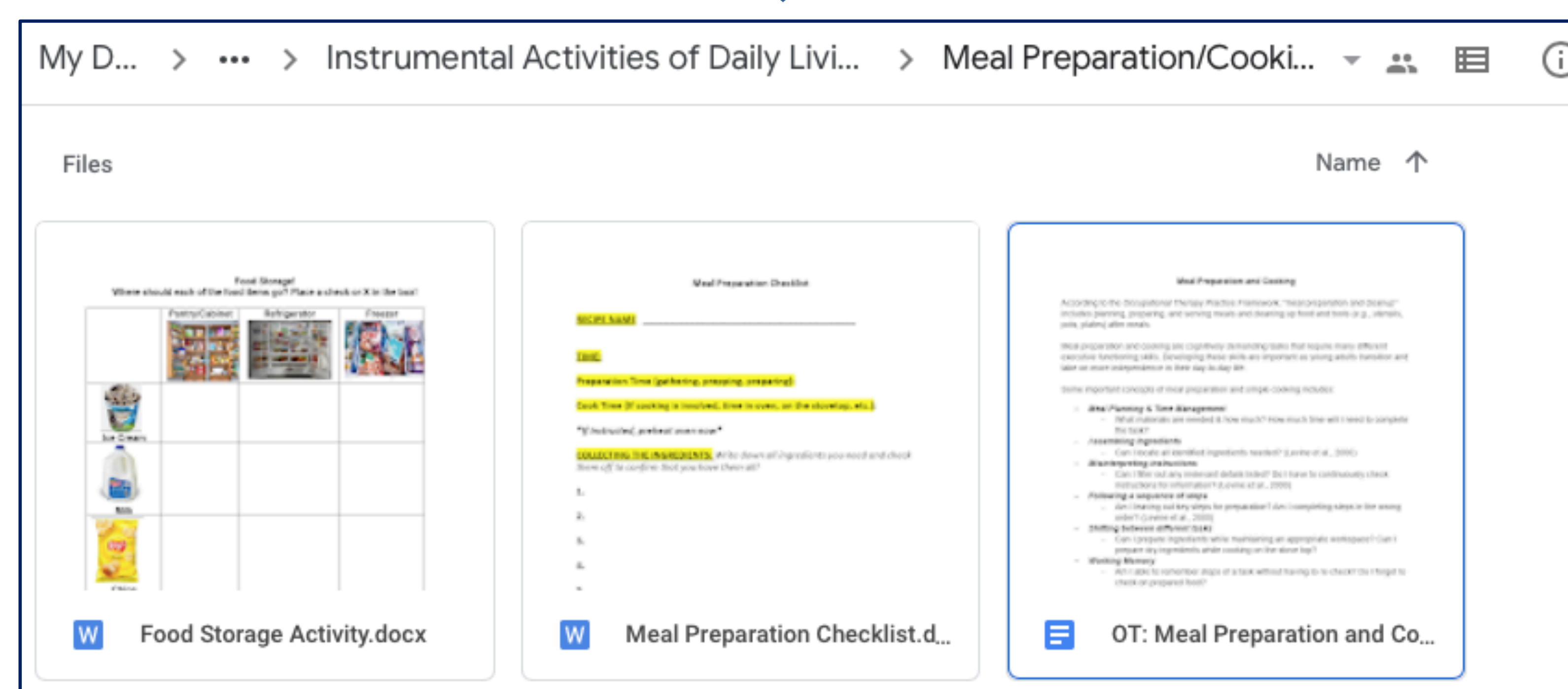
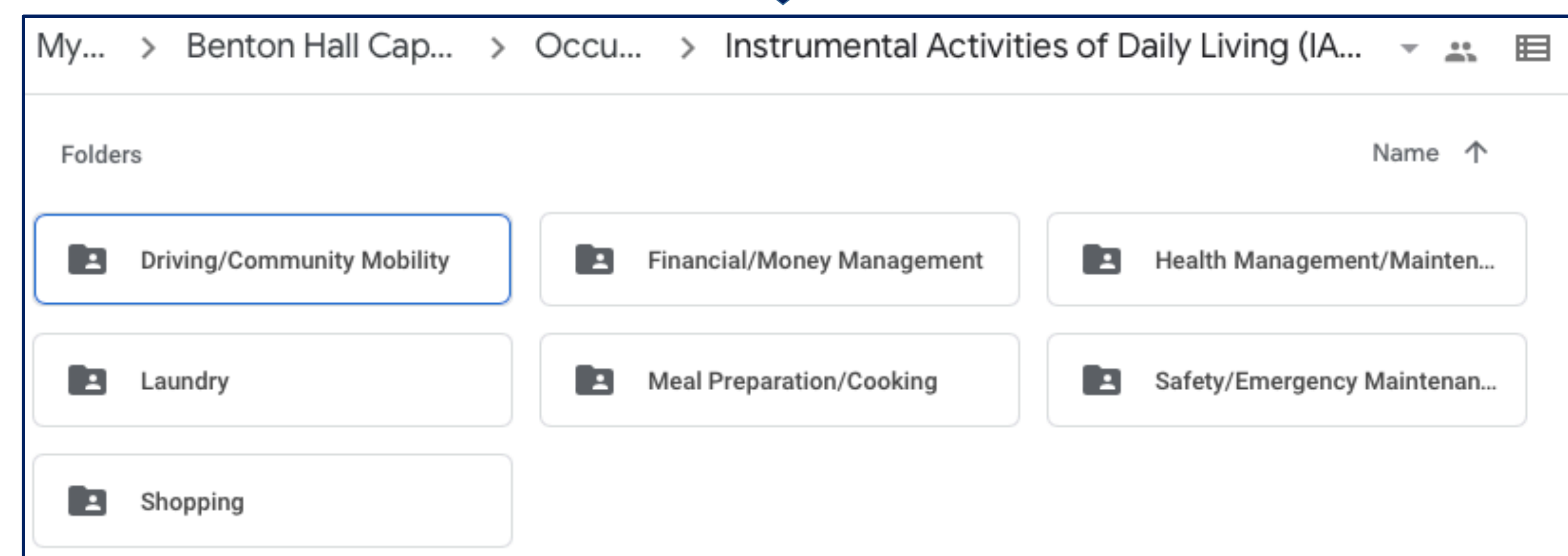
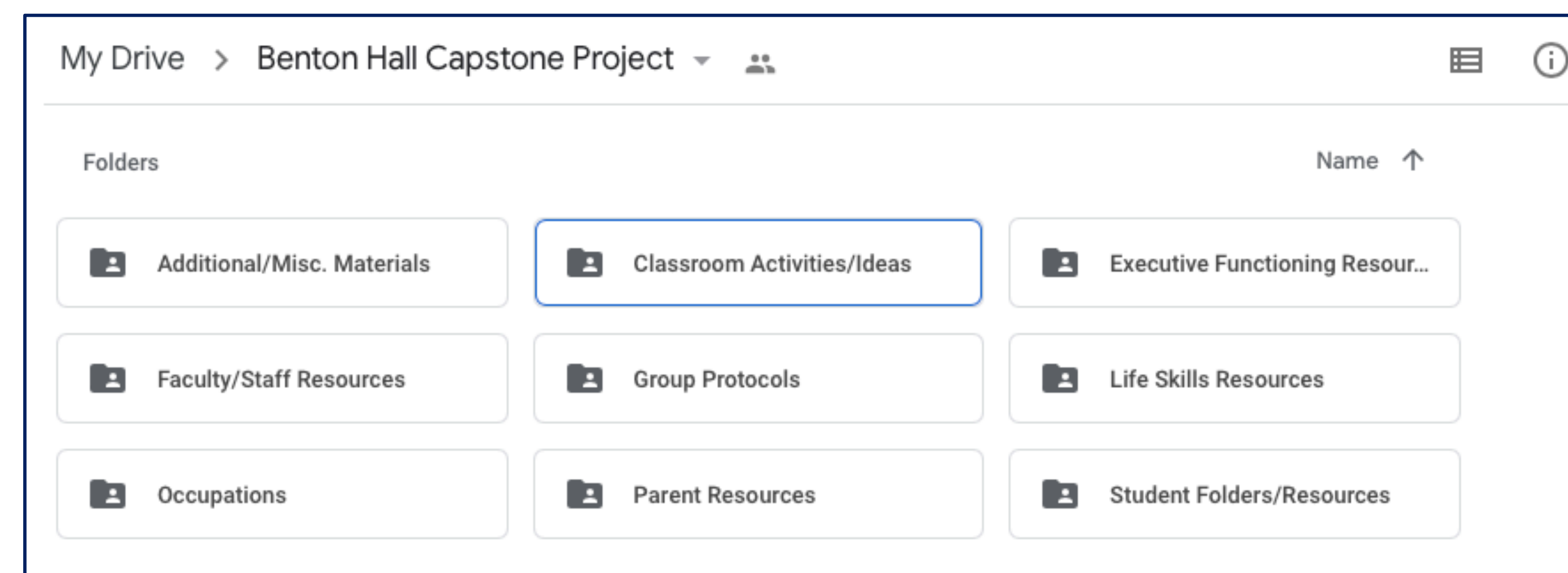
- Updated student demographics, including special accommodations and any other pertinent needs
- Compilation of materials and resources to assist with piloting 5<sup>th</sup> year internship/transition program
- Additional support resources to encourage self-determination, life skills, and overall participation amongst the high school population

## Capstone Project Goals

1. Collaborate with stakeholders to identify areas of need at Benton Hall Academy
2. Develop therapeutic use of self and establish rapport while communicating and interacting with students
3. Create and provide resources that provide relevant and useful information for students/faculty in order to increase overall self-determination and aid in transitions
4. Be creative, provide a unique occupational therapy perspective, and advocate for occupational therapy whenever applicable throughout the entire capstone experience

## Project Outcomes

- Provided virtual and hard-copy of large resource guide that included handouts/activities as well as occupational therapy’s unique role in each of the following topics:
  - **Occupations:**
    - *ADLs:* Personal hygiene/grooming
    - *IADLs:* Driving/community mobility, financial/money management, health management/maintenance, laundry, meal preparation/cooking, safety/emergency maintenance, shopping
    - Leisure/interest exploration, rest/sleep, social participation, work (volunteer/paid)
  - **Executive functioning:** Organization, time management, self-regulation
  - **Life Skills:** Job applications/interviewing, job skills, functional writing, self advocacy



- Conducted 1:1 interviews with senior students to identify greatest areas of need
- Created and distributed individualized resource booklets to appropriate senior students based on interview responses
- Provided document outlining therapy services, life skills resources, extracurricular health resources, extracurricular enrichment resources, and mental health community resources/contacts
- Generated up-to-date excel spreadsheet of demographics of Benton Hall students, including formal diagnoses, noted school/classroom accommodations, and other special considerations
- Provided and explained final deliverables to stakeholders

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to my expert mentor, Mary Reynolds, for providing great mentorship and guidance. Thank you to Mr. Purcell as well as the entire staff/faculty for warmly welcoming me into the Benton Hall family. I am so grateful for this opportunity to learn and grow. Thank you to my faculty mentor, Dr. Iliff, for the constant support during the capstone experience.