The Perspectives of Professionals of Behavior Exhibited by Children with Disabilities after Engagement in a Snoezelen Sensorimotor Room Treatment
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Introduction

- The percentage of children diagnosed with a developmental disability (DD) increased significantly from 2009 to 2017, resulting in one out of every six children having one or more developmental disabilities (Zablototsky, 2019).
- The National Health Interview Survey examined the prevalence of ten DDs in children aged three to seventeen in the U.S., revealing an overall increase from 16.2% to 17.7% (Zablototsky, 2019).
- It is crucial to identify interventions for children with DDs and understand professionals’ experiences with these interventions and their impact on children’s behavior.

Methods

- Population: Practitioners, aged 18 or older, who treat a child(ren), aged birth to 14 years, with a disability in Snoezelen based therapy.
- Recruitment Methods: Flyers were shared on UAB social media platforms. Recruitment also involved spreading the word through investigators, Bell Center Staff, and reaching out to organizations affiliated with the Christopher Douglas Hidden Angel Foundation.
- Participate Information and Consent: Participants were given study details and the investigator’s contact information. In the case of an interview, participants sign a HIPAA authorization form and are provided with a physical copy of the information sheet. Alternatively, investigator had access.

Results

- Respondents expressed a clear understanding of sensory room equipment, with majority reporting a positive impact on the therapeutic relationship. There was unanimous support for recommending sensory rooms to other facilities. Additional feedback emphasized the importance of therapist training in MSEs.

Discussion

- Drawbacks of MSE engagement:
  - Overstimulation common in MSEs, potentially leading to negative behavioral outcomes.
  - Negative behaviors attributed to overstimulation emphasize the need to tailor sensory experiences in MSEs to meet each child’s specific needs.
  - Momentary effects result from immediate and intense sensory input.
  - Perceived drawbacks underscore potential challenges associated with MSEs.
  - Essential to consider these perceived drawbacks in designing and implementing MSEs for a balanced and effective approach addressing individual needs.

- Additional Comments:
  - Varied ease in understanding sensory room features reported.
  - Importance of therapist training emphasized in additional comments.
  - Practitioners advocate for recommending sensory rooms with proper training.
  - Engaged practitioners crucial for positive outcomes in MSEs.

- Implications:
  - Findings can inform clinical practitioners in designing and implementing sensory interventions.
  - Implications for professional development and training in sensory rooms.
  - Educational settings can optimize sensory experiences for students.
  - Parents can make informed decisions about incorporating sensory interventions at home.
  - Insights used to improve the quality of sensory environments in facilities.

Limitations:

- Limited sample size (10 participants).
- Survey method may limit depth of insights.
- Viewpoint on children’s perspectives not included.
- Future research needed for a more comprehensive understanding.

Future Research:

- Explore specific sensory room characteristics for different populations.
- Investigate enduring effects of sensory interventions.
- Derive into personalized approaches to sensory support.
- Enrich wider research on sensory interventions for children.

Prevalence of Developmental Disabilities in MSE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>1/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebral Palsy</td>
<td>1/400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Syndrome</td>
<td>1/1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
<td>1/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

- A survey was conducted to examine the perspectives of professionals of behavior exhibited by children with disabilities after engagement in a Snoezelen sensorimotor room treatment. The findings suggest that sensory rooms can positively impact therapeutic relationships, foster engagement, and support self-regulation. However, there are also considerations such as the potential for overstimulation, monetary effects, and the importance of practitioner knowledge and training. These implications have relevance for clinical practice, educational settings, parent guidance, and further research endeavors. The study underscores the need for thoughtful design, individualized approaches, and ongoing professional development to optimize the effectiveness of sensory interventions for children.

Acknowledgement & Contact information

Special thanks to Megan Carpenter, OTD, OTR/L, SCFES for guidance throughout this project to Mary Laura Day, MSOT, OTR/L.

For inquiries, please contact Rikia Baker at rbaker3@uab.edu. Your interest is valued.

References


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References