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Using The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach to Promote Employment Skill Acquisition in Autistic Transition-Aged Youth

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Using The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach to Promote Employment Skill Acquisition in Autistic Transition-Aged Youth

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Background and Proposal Process

- It is estimated that for autistic adolescent students who transition to higher education or employment, half experience expulsion or disruption from their position within two to three years post-high school (Taylor & DaWalt, 2017).
- Only 25% of autistic high school students receive paid work experience, which is less than half of their neurotypical peers (Roux et al., 2019).
- Despite the desire to join the workforce (Anderson & Butt, 2021), autistic young adults are least likely to look for or obtain employment and take longer to find employment than other disability groups (Wei et al., 2018).
- The autistic population has recognized the need for employment training, improved support services, and social skills training (Sosnowy et al., 2018, as cited in Connor et al., 2020) to decrease the wage/employment gap that exists.
- This capstone aims to integrate the autistic population into the workforce through development of an employment readiness program guided by a novel approach for autism treatment, The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach, and occupational therapy practices.

Brief bio

I'm Kristen Mey and I am an occupational therapy doctoral student. I have a Psychology B.S., various work experiences at autism achievement centers, and fieldwork experiences in home health and inpatient rehabilitation, working with the traumatic brain injury population. My service-learning experience was completed at Northeast Reintegration Center and was mental health-focused. I am an advocate for mental health and aspire to become a travel/home health OT post-graduation.

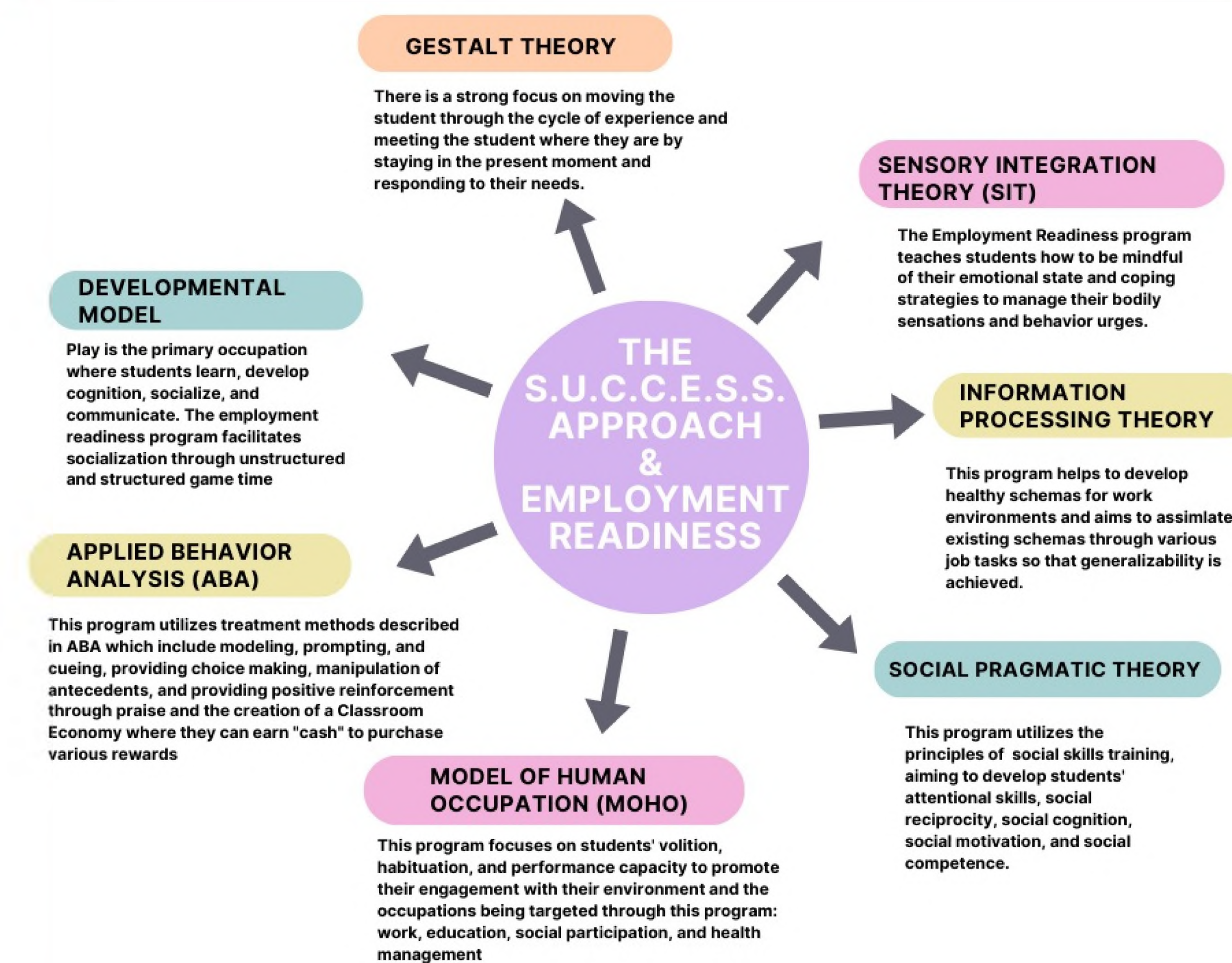


Capstone Activities

- Designed a 12-week **Employment Readiness** program aimed at improving **confidence**, **self-determination**, and **social skills**
- Created a program manual that maps the evaluation and intervention processes that occupational therapists and other staff members can utilize when addressing Employment Readiness with autistic adolescents
- Integrated The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach principles into the program manual and described the roles of the occupational therapist and transdisciplinary aides.
- Tried social group interventions for 6 weeks to gain experience working with the autistic adolescent population
- Created video tutorials to teach e-commerce and graphic design skills to promote independence and self-directed learning
- Presented information on this capstone experience to the parents of the students I was working with.
- Created a resource guide for parents to access job supports such as job coaches, vocational rehabilitation services, and local businesses that hire individuals with disabilities.
- Submission of an article on The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach to AOTA's OT Practice Magazine.
- Completed The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach online course in addition to various autism internet modules presented by the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI)



The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Approach (TSA)



Key References

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- Vernon, T.W., Miller, A. R., Ko, J. A., Barrett, A.C., McGarry, E. S. (2018). A randomized controlled trial of the Social Tools and Rules for Teens (START) program: An immersive socialization intervention for adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48, 892-904. DOI: 10.1007/s1080301733801

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