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## The Positive Impact of Occupational Therapy Working with Foster Youth on Campus; Leading by Example

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## Abstract

Occupational therapy addresses advocacy and promotion of inclusion for individuals who have limited access and rights. But, there is limited availability of occupational therapy being involved with foster youth to offer housing support which includes life skills for them to be independent. Despite advocacy and inclusion, these efforts have suffered a lack of awareness when it comes to foster youth and this population needs to be educated on these topics.

- Educated students through therapeutic workshops, contacted foster youth resources, and conducted interviews with students at The Pratt Center.
- Resources included non-profit organizations, universities, and professionals that work at the Cuyahoga Children & Services Department.
- A guidebook was created that is easily navigable and accessible to foster youth to refer to once they graduate and be independent.
- The therapeutic workshops and sensory room were beneficial as students learned how to manage their anxiety and self-regulate
- Students on campus expressed the support they had on campus was good but they did not know what support they would have after college and what that life will look like.

## Brief bio

My name is Nautica Bell and I am a doctoral occupational therapy student at Cleveland State University. My clinical training have included acute care, school setting, inpatient rehab, and outpatient pediatrics. As an OT, I want to advocate for individuals who don't have a voice or don't know how to use their voice. I have a passion to work with youth and adults/older adults in the future utilizing client-centered care. To learn more about my capstone project and experience at CSU, please scan the QR code provided.



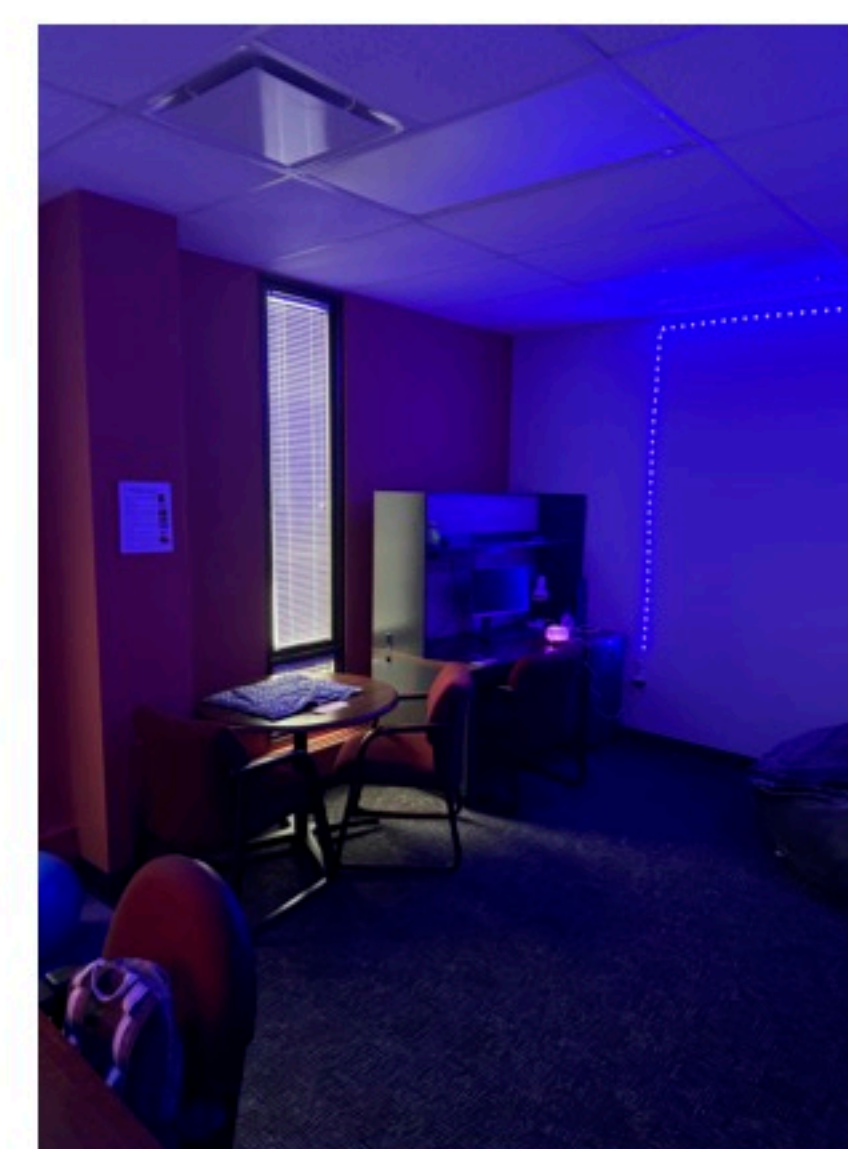
## Capstone Experience and Implications

### Therapeutic Activities:

- Sensory Workshop
- Therapeutic Sewing
- Mental Health Workshop

**Guidebook:** Independent guide for youth aging out of foster care (Scan QR code)

### Sensory Room



**Ongoing Research:** Paper is still in process but is planned to be finished and published in the near future.

### Scholar Quotes:

“I don’t know where I am going to live”

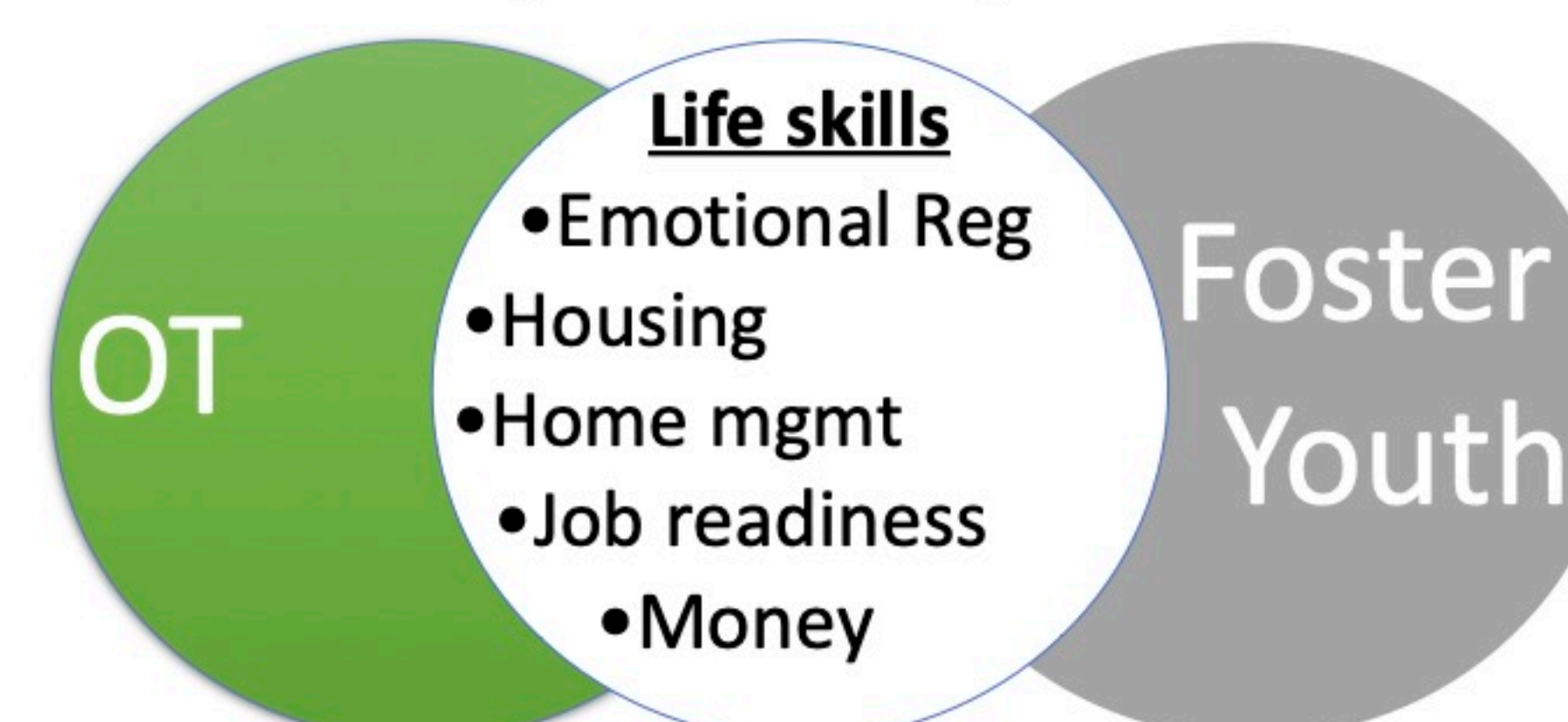
“Support from you and staff from the program help me challenge myself when I don’t think I can do something”

“I don’t think I would’ve done well with my grades or my ability to be social with people because of the community the program has”

**Implications:** This experience gave me the opportunity to be a leader and a role model to the female scholars. Scholars gained skills to manage their mental health needs and resources that will help them as they transition into adulthood after college.

## Synthesis

### Education and Project Development



## Challenges & Recommendations

### Challenges

- Participation and building repertoire
- A change in site mentor during midterm week

### Recommendations

For future endeavors, I recommend focusing and addressing more in depth on medical care and transportation needs within the foster youth population.

- Metro Health
- Financial Department-Insurance
- BMV
- Campus Resources
- OT driving stimulator within the OT department

## Key References

- Community Resource Guide. (2024). <https://hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov/resources-data/resources>
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