

Cleveland State University

EngagedScholarship@CSU

Occupational Therapy Doctoral Student
Capstone Posters

Occupational Therapy Doctoral Student
Capstones

Spring 2024

Addressing Burnout Among Caregivers of People with Spinal Cord Injury

Rachael Vance
Cleveland State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/ot_capstone_posters



Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Recommended Citation

Vance, Rachael, "Addressing Burnout Among Caregivers of People with Spinal Cord Injury" (2024).
Occupational Therapy Doctoral Student Capstone Posters. 73.
https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/ot_capstone_posters/73

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Occupational Therapy Doctoral Student Capstones at EngagedScholarship@CSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Occupational Therapy Doctoral Student Capstone Posters by an authorized administrator of EngagedScholarship@CSU. For more information, please contact library.es@csuohio.edu.



Addressing Burnout Among Caregivers of People with Spinal Cord Injury

Rachael Vance S/OT; Lauryn Wasil MOT, OTR/L; and Gina Kubec OTD, OTR/L

Abstract

- **Background:** Lack of intervention focusing on caregiver burnout among informal caregivers of people with SCI resulting in the potential to impact long-term rehabilitation on the person with SCI
- **Site:** Louis Stokes Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center: “Hub” of SCI care for the region
- **Focus:** Research, program modification, advanced clinical skills
- **Methods:** Recruited caregivers to participate in needs assessment; Recruited veterans and their caregivers to participate in mental health groups; Created, administered, and analyzed qualitative/quantitative data from surveys; Updated previous mental health program; Presented findings to interdisciplinary team
- **Results:** Mental health stigma; Positive trends between hours of care provided and date of injury with level of perceived burnout
- **Conclusion:** Focus on mental health among patients and caregivers of SCI can have the potential to enhance the overall rehabilitation process

Brief bio

As an occupational therapy student, I am passionate about holistic approaches regarding care for individuals. With a lens on mental health, I aspire to take a unique perspective by addressing individual mental health needs and struggles to enhance overall wellbeing to improve functional performance. Please scan the QR code below to learn more about my capstone project along with my experience throughout CSU’s OT doctoral program.



Capstone Experience and Implications

Mental Health Groups: Implemented and updated a billable 6-week program to address OT’s role in mental health for veterans with SCI



Takeaways:

- Mental health stigma
- Value of togetherness / relating to one another

Needs Assessment: Identified and analyzed caregivers needs to aide in the process of mitigating burnout

Questions	Avg.
“I feel burnt out when caring for my loved one with SCI”	2.5
"Caring for my loved one with SCI affects my ability to complete everyday tasks"	2.35
"Caring for my loved one with SCI affects my ability to take care of my own personal needs."	2.33
"It is important for me to take care of my mental health to avoid facing burnout"	4.25
"I felt prepared when taking on the role of caring for my loved one with SCI"	3.13

Themes:

- Caregivers would have liked to be taught: How to set boundaries, how to be more patient, easier ways to complete caregiving tasks
- Caregivers wish to find out more about: Medical symptoms and caregiver support resources
- Caregivers find balance through: Maintaining hobbies, taking time for themselves, and leaning on religion

Synthesis

Boyer’s Model of Scholarship: Discovery of innovative information to identify concerns and needs that caregivers and individuals of SCI face throughout their everyday life to advance knowledge and intervention in OT.

Challenges & Recommendations

Mental Health Stigma

Change group name to OT and Psychosocial Functions
Recruit participants utilizing mental health educational handout



Small Sample Size and Technology

Lack of caregivers on SCI unit Technological barrier utilizing QR code and navigating survey



Future Directions

Gather additional data; Caregiver support groups; Caregiving and stress handout; Resource handout for caregivers

Key References

- Farajzadeh, A., Akbarfahimi, M., Maroufizadeh, S., & Miri Lavasani, N. (2021). Factors associated with quality of life among caregivers of people with spinal cord injury. *Occupational therapy international*, 9921710. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/9921710>
- Smith, E. M., Boucher, N., & Miller, W. C. (2016). Caregiving services in spinal cord injury: a systematic review of the literature. *SPINAL CORD*, 54(8), 562–569.
- Wilson, C. S., DeDios-Stern, S., Bocage, C., Gray, A., Crudup, B. M., & Russell, H. F. (2022). A systematic review of how spinal cord injury impacts families. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 67(3), 273-303. <https://doi-org.proxy.ulib.csuohio.edu/10.1037/rep0000431.supp>
- Zanini, C., Amann, J., Brach, M., Gemperli, A., & Rubinelli, S. (2021). The challenges characterizing the lived experience of caregiving. A qualitative study in the field of spinal cord injury. *Spinal Cord*, 59(5), 493–503. <https://doi-org.proxy.ulib.csuohio.edu/10.1038/s41393-021-00618-4>

Acknowledgements

- Gina Kubec, OTR/L, for sharing her expertise and guiding me throughout this experience.
- Lauryn Wasil, OTR/L, for being so generous and kind throughout my capstone experience. I am forever grateful to have a site mentor as supportive as her.
- The Cleveland VA SCI department for welcoming me to their team and giving me guidance and support throughout this entire experience.