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Student-athletes and their hidden opponent: Assessing and supporting student-athlete mental health and well-being

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Abstract



- Collegiate student-athletes can benefit from occupational therapy (OT) intervention as occupational therapists (OTs) are educated on mental health practices.
- This capstone involved conducting an in-depth needs assessment of the mental health resources on Cleveland State

University's campus and in the Athletics Department.

- There was a collaboration with the Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) staff and the Athletics Counselor to provide mental health resources reported to be needed by the student-athletes (SAs).
- Resources were created and made available to the SAs on their "Community for Student-Athlete Engagement" Blackboard course.

Brief Biography

My name is Dena Wenzinger, and I am an occupational therapy student at Cleveland State University. I have always been passionate about mental health. With my experience as a student-athlete along with my bachelor's degree in psychology, OT education, and clinical work in inpatient psych, I knew I could provide many valuable skills to assist this population and demonstrate how an OT can work in this setting. This is why I chose this for my capstone. I could also see myself working in this setting as an OT in the future.

Scan my QR code to learn more.

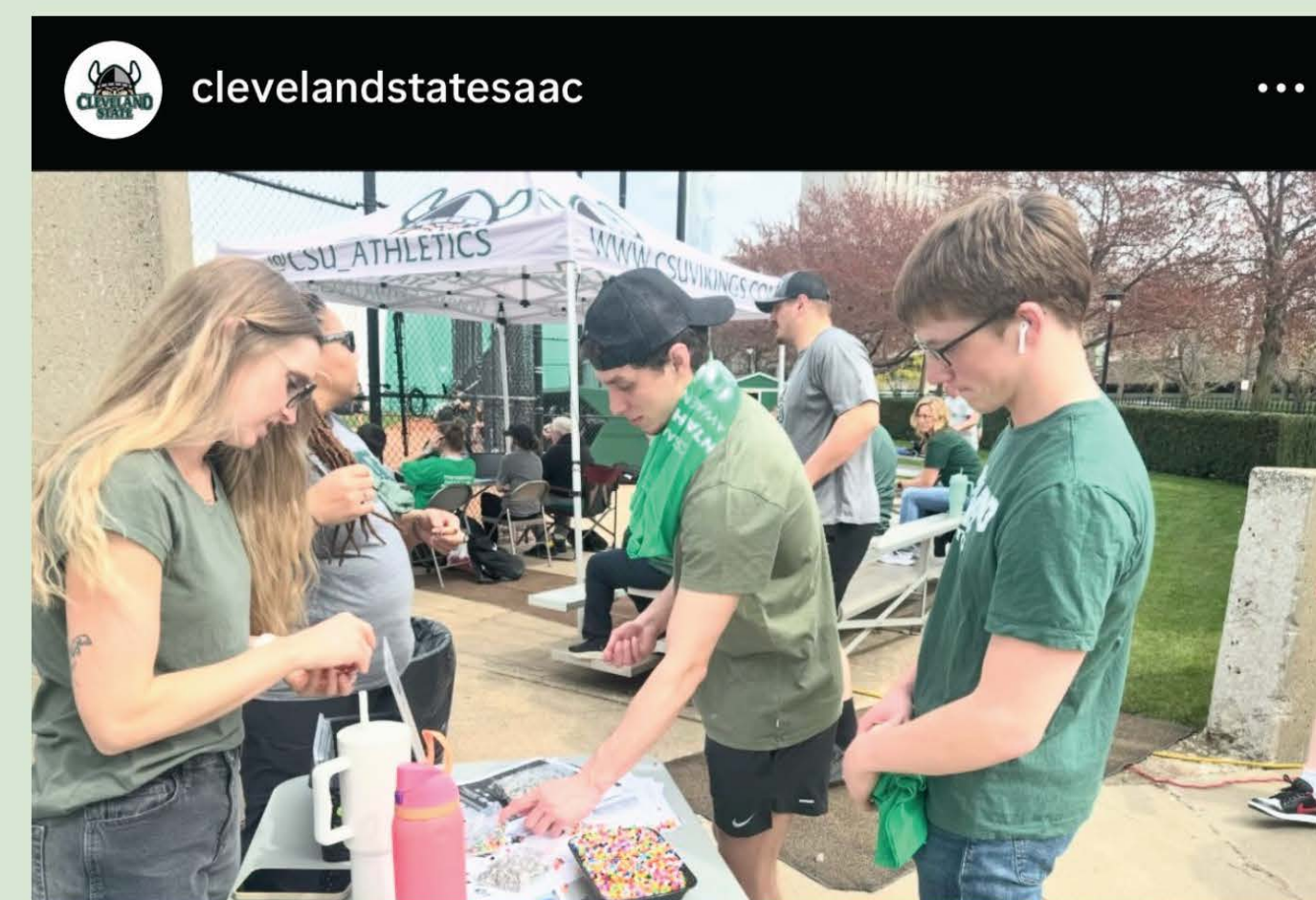


Capstone Experience and Implications

Occupational therapy can help student-athletes beat their hidden opponent!

Activities

- Attended meetings and events with staff, coaches, and SAs
- Completed needs assessment activities and conducted surveys:
 - CSU Student-Athlete Mental Health Survey
 - Questionnaire for Coaches
- Attended sporting events (basketball games, wrestling match, softball games, lacrosse game)
- Worked with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)
 - Helped with their Mental Health Awareness Week and games
 - Provided mental wellness activities at the games
- Held two Mental Wellness Groups and collaborated with the Athletics Counselor to run a Mental Health and Performance Workshop



SAAC Mental Health Awareness Week softball game
SAs making keyring fidgets



Athletics Academic Honors Luncheon
SA receiving an award for demonstrating courage in the face of adversity

Takeaways

- OTs can be a great asset to an Intercollegiate Athletics Department
- OTs can provide a different perspective on the mental health care of SAs
- SAs can benefit in many ways from OT intervention

A Table of Contents of the Mental Health Resources created on the SA Blackboard course is available through the QR code.

Key References

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Challenges & Recommendations

Challenges faced:

- How to get the SAs' participation and engagement in activities
- How to get information to the SAs and figuring out what platform to use
- Finding time in everyone's schedule for programming
- A lot of programming going on to work around

Recommendations:

- Pair mental health/wellness groups or workshops with other events SAs go to
- Do the workshops during the SAAC meetings or before them
- Do activities at team meetings and/or practices
- Prioritize the events for SAs, don't hold as many, or combine what can be combined

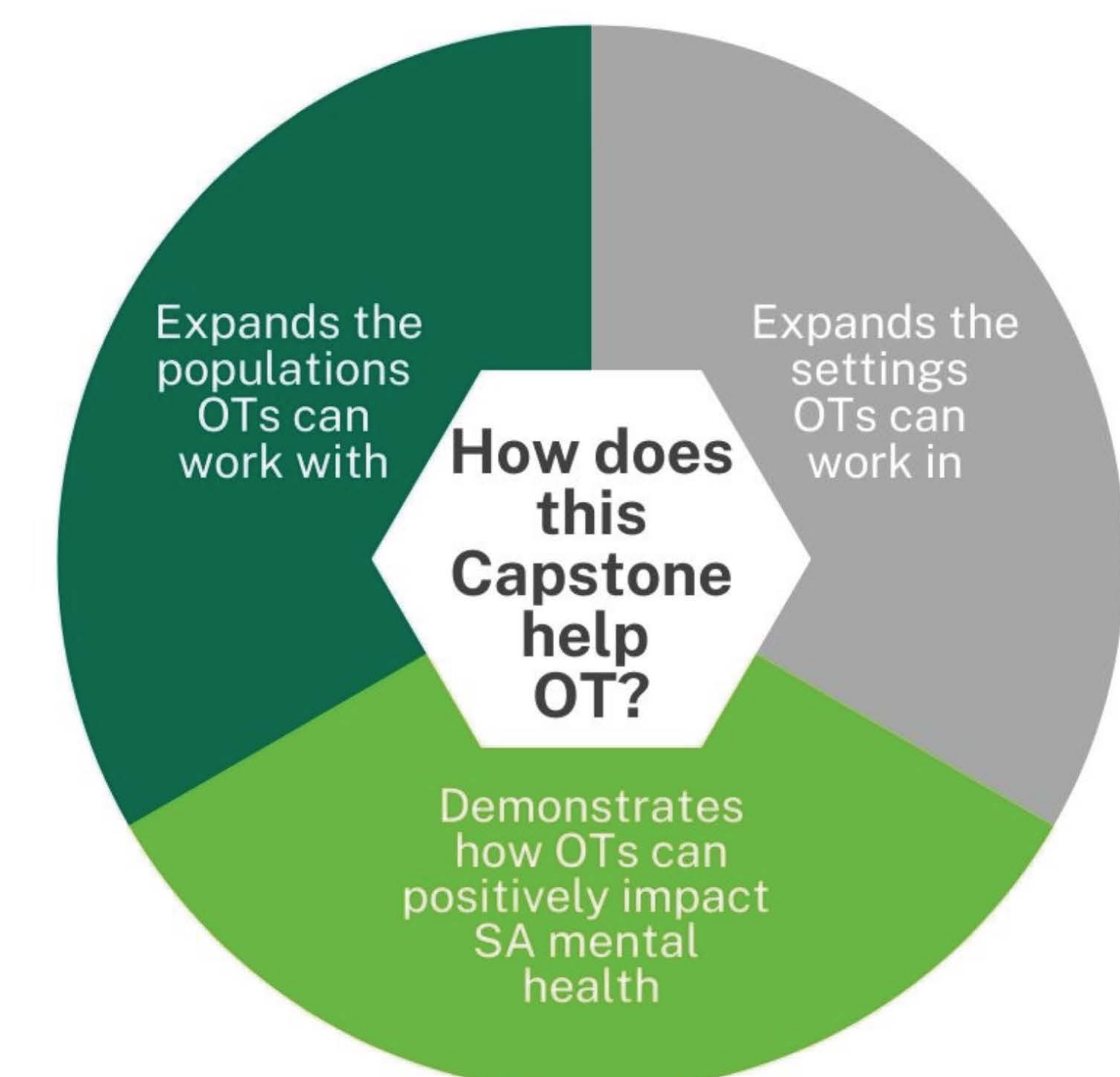
Possible next steps:

- Prepare and run more workshops pairing counseling and OT interventions
- Create a more specific SA Mental Health and OT Interventions workbook

Synthesis

In the literature, there is a gap that shows OT is not a method of service delivery specifically for SA mental health on college campuses.

Through this capstone, I found that there is a space for OTs to work in Intercollegiate Athletics Departments and benefit SA mental health.



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