

Project Description & Sites

Area of Study: Advocacy and Leadership

Population: Individuals with Autism and First Responders

Sites: Ben's Blue Bags & K1ds Count Therapy

Description: The primary focus of my project was how occupational therapists can advocate for individuals with autism through adequate education and training for First Responders. After receiving education on the role of First Responders in emergency calls, it was evident that adequate education/interventions were also needed for the clients surrounding safety awareness skills.

Project Completion and Outcomes

Outcome Measure #1: In order to develop advocacy skills, the student will create at least one fundraiser event to raise money for Ben's Blue Bags to secure funds for effective autism education of First Responders throughout the community

Related Learning Objectives: create at least 2 advertising materials to promote the fundraiser, advocate and promote fundraiser through information booth, create emergency plan visual board

Outcome Measure #2: In order to aide in the enhancement of the Ben's Blue Bags program, the student will complete a needs assessment with added recommendations

Related Learning Objectives: knowledge of protocols through interview, develop a needs assessment

Outcome Measure #3: In order to increase First Responders knowledge in autism spectrum disorder, the student will assist in bringing the Ben's Blue Bags Program to at least two First Responder Departments

Related Learning Objectives: attend two educational trainings to gain increased knowledge of First Responders role, create a program implementation manual, documentation on the individuals that attended

Mission & Vision Statements

Mission: To enhance education and support for First Responders with bags containing sensory stimulation items that help to deescalate autistic and special needs patients during over-stimulating emergency situations.

Vision: To support the needs of individuals with autism or other disabilities when in an emergency situation through First Responder education and training.

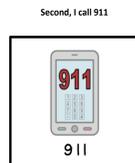
T-Shirts for Sale!

Support Autism Awareness Training for First Responders

Ben's Blue Bags provides autism awareness training to First Responders as well as resources to utilize in an emergency situation to help de-escalate overstimulating input.



When there is a fire I...



T-Shirts

- 3 colors
 - Dusty Blue,
 - Maize Yellow, &
 - Coral
- \$13 each

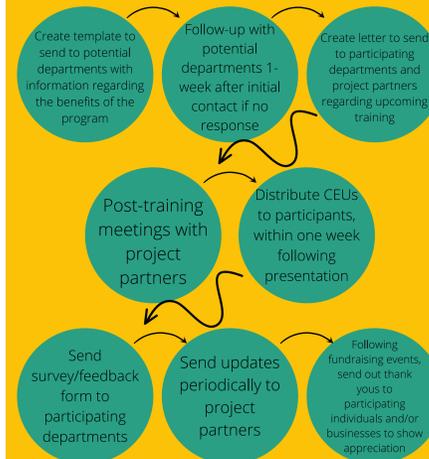


Reminder

A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the program to support the continued growth throughout Indiana!

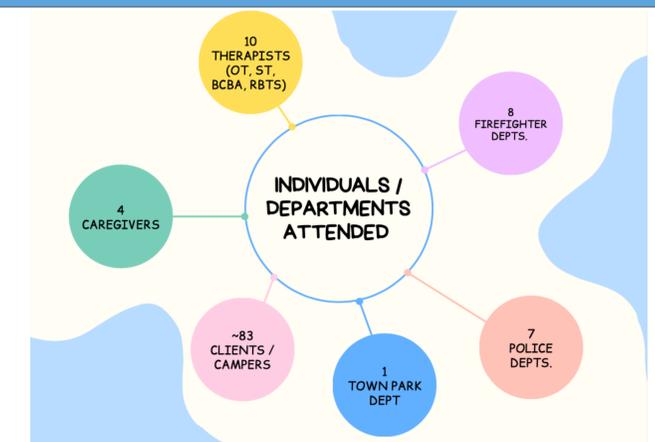
Be on the look-out for the order form in an upcoming email! Thank you for your support!

Communication Plan



Deliverables

- ❖1: Fundraiser
- ❖2: Marketing Materials (2)
- ❖3: Informational Handout
- ❖4: Needs Assessment
- ❖5: Program Implementation Manual
- ❖6: Emergency Plan Visual Board
- ❖7: First Responders in Attendance
- ❖8: Interview/Summary of Protocols



Needs Assessment | Literature Review

Needs Assessment: I collaborated with my expert mentor and therapists at an ABA clinic on the need for effective autism awareness training for First Responders and the role that occupational therapists could play. It was discovered that occupational therapists could support in advocating for adequate training, educate on autism, and effective ways to utilize sensory items and communication boards to support the de-escalation of overstimulation.

Literature Review: In 2010, Indiana mandated that all First Responders partake in yearly autism awareness training (Indiana Law Enforcement Academy, n.d.). Tint et al. (2017) suggest that an established guideline is needed regarding interactions with individuals with autism spectrum disorder during emergencies. A current program being implemented has suggested that hands-on learning experiences may increase the comfortability and knowledge that First Responders gain regarding autism (Lutman, 2017). The literature supports the need for adequate autism awareness training for First Responders.

Christ | Scholarship | Service

Christ: Advocating for a vulnerable population to support a more inclusive community.

Scholarship: Ensuring educational materials and resources are the most up-to-date and research-based

Service: Providing education and resources to First Responders to help provide high-quality care to individuals with autism and other diagnoses during emergencies.

Future Implications for OT

- ❖ Occupational therapists can continue to advocate for vulnerable populations by collaborating with various leaders in the community and provide evidence-based information and strategies to utilize to support a more inclusive town.
- ❖ Throughout the capstone experience, I have confirmed my passion for the pediatric population and advocacy work. I look forward to enhancing my personal and professional skills within this population to support the clients continued growth and independence in daily tasks.



KEY REFERENCES *Full reference list available upon request

- Indiana Law Enforcement Academy. (n.d.). *Mandated in-service training*. <https://www.in.gov/ilea/2525.htm>
- Lutman, A. (2017). Autism awareness for first responders. *EMS World*, 46(11), 38-41. <https://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=22&sid=6a2a1bc8-f69-4eee-9487-54f5987362fb%40sessionmgr102>
- Tint, A., Palucka, A., Bradley, E., Weiss, J., & Lunsby, Y. (2017). Correlates of police involvement among adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders*, 47(9), 2639-2647. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3182-5>