



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Research in Developmental Disabilities

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/redevdis

Program opportunities of residential immersive life skills programs for youth with disabilities



Gillian King^{a,b,d,*}, Amy McPherson^{a,c,d}, Donya Mosleh^{a,d}, Laura Hartman^{a,b,e}, Jesiqua Rapley^a, Madhu Pinto^a

^a Bloorview Research Institute, Toronto, Canada

^b Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

^c Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

^d Rehabilitation Sciences Institute, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

^e Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Toronto, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Number of reviews completed is 2

Keywords:

Activity settings

Fidelity

Intervention

Life skills

Measure of Environmental Qualities of Activity Settings

MEQAS

Program opportunities

Transition

Youth

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Residential immersive life skills programs provide youth with the skills and outlooks needed to adopt new roles in life. Observed program opportunities and service providers' perceptions of opportunities were examined to determine program fidelity. Service providers' views of how the programs work were also examined.

Method: 107 activity settings were observed across two summers at three programs, with opportunities assessed using the Measure of Environmental Qualities of Activity Settings (MEQAS-48). Activity settings were classified by session format (instructional versus experiential) and activity type (active physical, skill-based, self-improvement). Qualitative interviews were held with seven service providers.

Results: Service providers indicated the importance of life-preparatory learning opportunities for social interaction, choice, and skill development, which aligned with high observed MEQAS-48 opportunities for social interaction, choice in experiential session formats, and personal growth. Providers individualized program delivery to provide youth with personally meaningful and challenging experiences. Providers also discussed emergent, transformational outcomes, including enhanced awareness of strengths, enhanced confidence in skills, identity development, and greater awareness of future life possibilities.

Conclusions: The study provided evidence of program fidelity, along with robust evidence for program opportunities as an active ingredient that may be transferable to the design and delivery of other transition-support programs.

What this paper adds?

Given interest in the fidelity of complex intervention programs (i.e., whether they are delivered as intended) and in how they bring about change, it is important to examine program opportunities and service providers' views of important variables. This paper provides a large-scale, two-year investigation of the fidelity and opportunities provided by three residential life skills programs for youth with disabilities, in which youth attend university/college residences to learn life skills and gain a realistic experience of living

* Corresponding author at: Bloorview Research Institute, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, 150 Kilgour Road, Toronto, Ontario, M4G 1R8, Canada.

E-mail address: gking27@uwo.ca (G. King).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2018.09.003>

Received 29 November 2017; Received in revised form 21 June 2018; Accepted 19 September 2018

0891-4222/© 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

away from home. The article indicates the utility of the MEQAS-48 in understanding the affordances and fidelity of life skills programs, and provides a comprehensive taxonomy of activity settings that can be used by others to characterize the nature of complex life skills interventions. The study provides evidence that these programs offer appreciable life-preparatory opportunities for cooperative group activity, social interaction with adults and peers, and personal growth, which are not always experienced by youth with disabilities in their home environments. The study also indicates the value of experiential session formats, which provided rich affordances to youth, including opportunities for choice. Thus, the study suggests the importance of designing youth transition-support programs to provide rich and repeated opportunities for social interaction with peers, cooperative group activity, choice (providing youth with a sense of control and self-direction), and skill development through both instruction and application. Program opportunities appear to be an important type of active ingredient that may be transferable to the design and delivery of other transition-support programs.

1. Introduction

There is growing interest in the fidelity of complex intervention programs (i.e., whether they are delivered as intended) and how they effect change (Craig et al., 2008; Medical Research Council, 2000). Examining program opportunities can provide important insights into how change occurs through intervention (King, 2017).

Our interest is in transition programs for youth with disabilities that simulate the real-world by taking place away from home in college/university residences. These programs are intended to provide opportunities for youth to have experiences supporting the development of life skills. Life skills are adaptive behaviors that enable people to meet the demands of daily life (World Health Organization, 2003), including the challenges that arise in new life roles and at times of life transitions. Experiential learning is considered to be a crucial, life-changing aspect of these programs (King, McPherson, Kingsnorth, Stewart, Glencross-Eimantas, Gorter et al., 2015; McPherson, King, Rudzik, Kingsnorth, & Gorter, 2016).

1.1. The importance of opportunities for growth and development

Youth with disabilities may lack opportunities to develop life skills and to have developmental experiences concerning social interaction, choice, and personal growth (King, Kingsnorth et al., 2016). Opportunities are defined as factors outside the individual that make a behavior possible and/or prompt a behavior by providing facilitating conditions (Michie, van Stralen, & West, 2011). Thus, opportunities are seen as an essential condition affecting behavior change (Michie et al., 2011). Furthermore, providing opportunities for meaningful experiences is considered to be a mechanism of client change in a variety of pediatric rehabilitation models (Batorowicz, King, Mishra, & Missiuna, 2016; Gorter et al., 2014; King, Petrenchik, Law, & Hurley, 2009; King, Imms, Stewart, Freeman, & Nguyen, 2018). These models adopt a developmental systems perspective by drawing attention to how the sociocultural world provides opportunities and contexts for development (Lerner, 1998; Overton, 1998). For example, the Developmental Health Model (Petrenchik & King, 2011) focuses on the developmental benefits arising from experiences associated with the qualities of environmental settings, including opportunities for growth-enhancing experiences such as interaction with peers, choice, and personal growth. More recently, a transactional framework for pediatric rehabilitation has emphasized the importance of transactional opportunities and experiences as foundational to how people build capacity, adapt, and change (King, McPherson, Kingsnorth, Gorter, & DeFinney, 2018). In addition to theories and frameworks specifying the importance of opportunities, researchers have discussed the developmental benefits of environmental settings that provide opportunities for challenge and support (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998), choice (Cardol, De Jong, & Ward, 2002), discovery and learning (Harding et al., 2009), having fun (Hammel et al., 2008), and for being with others (Petrenchik & King, 2011).

'Activity settings' are an important construct for considering environmental qualities that provide opportunities for beneficial participation experiences (King, Rigby, & Batorowicz, 2013). Activity settings refer to contextualized settings that situate child/youth activities and their participation experiences, and comprise elements of time, activity, place, person, and task (Batorowicz et al., 2016). Activity settings can be used to examine opportunities presumed to engender experiences leading to various competency-related, social, and psychological/emotional benefits (King et al., 2013; Petrenchik & King, 2011).

In previous research, we investigated the nature of optimal leisure activity settings for youth with severe disabilities. Youth's selected activity settings provided opportunities for choice, interaction with adults, and social interaction with peers, and youth reported experiencing relatively high levels of psychological engagement, social belonging, and control and choice (King, Batorowicz et al., 2014). There are implications for the design of program environments to ensure youth have opportunities for experiences that contribute to their development and longer-term positive life outcomes.

Although there has been long-standing conceptual understanding of the importance of environmental opportunities for growth and development, little research has investigated the opportunities that transition programs provide for youth with disabilities. The absence of appropriate measurement tools and frameworks for how to approach assessment of environmental settings has been a contributing factor. Thus, an existing gap is the nature of the opportunities offered in complex interventions such as youth life skills programs.

1.2. Opportunities of program environments

The important elements of program design and delivery are referred to as active ingredients (Whyte & Hart, 2003), important qualities (Bal et al., 2017), or essential attributes for intervention (Di Rezze, Law, Eva, Pollock, & Gorter, 2014). The active

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11002193>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11002193>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)