

## The Intentional Resiliency Club: A Pilot Mentorship Program for OT Students on Level II Fieldwork

Courtney J. Taylor, OTD, OTR/L<sup>1</sup>, Ana K. Brussa, OTD, OTR<sup>2</sup>, Kate Barlow, OTD, OTR/L, IMH-E®, FAOTA<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>American International College, Springfield, Massachusetts, United States; <sup>2</sup>Sonrisas Therapies, Austin, Texas, United States; <sup>3</sup>American International College, Springfield, MA, USA

DOI: [10.5014/ajot.2024.78S2-PO33](https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2024.78S2-PO33)

Date presented: March 22, 24

Primary Author and Speaker: Courtney J. Taylor, [courtney.taylor@aic.edu](mailto:courtney.taylor@aic.edu)

Occupational therapy students on Level II fieldwork experience stress which is exacerbated when students do not have the interpersonal skills to professionally manage conflicts, feedback, and performance difficulties. This mixed methods, concurrent transformative study piloted the feasibility of an Intentional Relationship Model (IRM) informed monthly club mentorship program and its influence on student perceived stress and interpersonal growth. A pretest, posttest design was employed using the Self Efficacy for Therapeutic Use of Self Scale (SETUSS) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Qualitative data was collected through Mentor journals. Results indicated students' stress remained the same after completion of Level II fieldwork; however, their ability to cope with/manage stress significantly improved ( $p = 0.03$ ). There was no significant difference in the SETUSS measure, and students ( $N=21$ ) also rated themselves higher on their therapeutic use of self before fieldwork than after the 24-week experience on 19 out of 30 total items. These findings provide valuable information into the student experience and program efficacy. Qualitative analysis of the six mentor journals revealed three overall themes: 1) Skill building results in feeling comfortable, 2) the benefits of peer support and 3) the importance of self-care. All three themes pointed to the advantages of the mentorship program. The IRM club mentorship program provided mentor and peer support, an opportunity to problem solve, and to share resources. Students also developed an understanding of the importance of self-care and an ability cope with/manage stress. Through member checking for trustworthiness, students and mentors recommended to continue the program, make the mentor sessions mandatory, and to decrease the student workload (i.e. assignments and meetings) while on fieldwork. These results invite educators to consider an IRM informed mentorship program to improve student outcomes.

### References

- Taylor, R. R. (2020). *The intentional relationship: Occupational therapy and use of self* (2nd ed.). F. A. Davis.
- Popova, E. S., Hahn, B., Morris, H., Loomis, K., Shy, E., Andrews, J., Iacullo, M., & Peters, A. (2022). Exploring well-being: Resilience, stress, and self-care in occupational therapy practitioners and students. *OTJR: Occupation, Participation, and Health*, 00(0), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15394492221091271>.
- Sheperd, M. M., Cardin, A., Boehne, T. L., Paloncy-Patel, K. A., & Willis, J. K. (2021). Therapeutic use of self and fieldwork experience: An exploration of the art and science of occupational therapy. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.26681/jote.2021.050313>.
- Lewis-Kipkulei, P., Dunn, L. S., & Carpenter, A. M. (2021). Implications for occupational therapy student stress, well-being, and coping: A scoping review. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.26681/jote.2021.050102>.