Creative Arts for Persons with Disabilities: Uniquely Collaborating with the Very Special Arts

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Abstract

This poster describes a unique community partnership between an occupational therapy program (a course in Creative Occupations) and the Very Special Arts/Nebraska. The Very Special Arts/Nebraska is a 501c3 organization with a mission to promote creativity in persons with disabilities and special needs by providing educational opportunities and fulfillment through the arts. Students participated in sessions to help individuals with disabilities engage in the creative arts. Artists from the community provided the instruction in visual arts, music, drama or dance. The intent of the collaboration with the artists was to promote inspiration, inclusion and participation for clients with the creative arts. The hands-on experiences were also service learning opportunities that helped to celebrate and build community.

Objectives

1. Gain an understanding of and value for the creative arts when working with persons with disabilities
2. Gain awareness about the lived experience of persons with disabilities who pursue creative arts as a career
3. Describe the unique collaboration of the VSA and local arts council in educating others especially students about the opportunities for persons with disabilities and the creative arts
4. Describe three different creative arts experiences as unique hands on learning opportunities for occupational therapy students in the community

The collaboration with the VSA Nebraska provided unique hands on experiences as well as service learning opportunities to also celebrate and build community. Some of the artists with disabilities came to class to share their personal experiences of working in the creative arts as a career and overcoming stigmas or barriers as well as describing effective adaptations with tools or processes. Guest artists for some of the workshops in the community provided unique experiences with music, theatre, dance or visual arts. Students provided insights and perspectives about client populations, participation, adaptation of tools, environments, or procedures and ways to promote client engagement with the media.

References


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