



***A STAFF EVALUATION OF A PILOT  
TRANSITIONS CURRICULUM ENGAGING  
YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM***

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# OT ROLE WITH TRANSITION AGED ADOLESCENTS

- Language
- Post-Secondary Transition
  - Abrupt shift, often without solid transition plan
  - IDEA vs. reality
  - “Falling off a cliff”
  - Navigating adult systems, providers, funding
- OT Scope
  - Evaluate current personal-environmental-occupational barriers & strengths
  - Develop plan to achieve success in new environments with new occupations post-transition
  - Task Analysis
  - Contextual interventions rather than traditional lecture
  - Multi-leveled interventions for individual-group-family-population
    - Not constrained to one environment

(Angell et al., 2018; Bagatell et al., 2017; Carter & Lunsford, 2005; Orentlicher et al., 2017)



# SELF-DETERMINATION

- *“Volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and to maintain or improve one’s quality of life”*
  - Self-management
  - Goal setting
  - Choice making
  - Problem solving
  - Decision making
  - Self-advocacy

(Angell et al., 2018; Orentlicher et al., 2017; Wehmeyer et al., 2005)



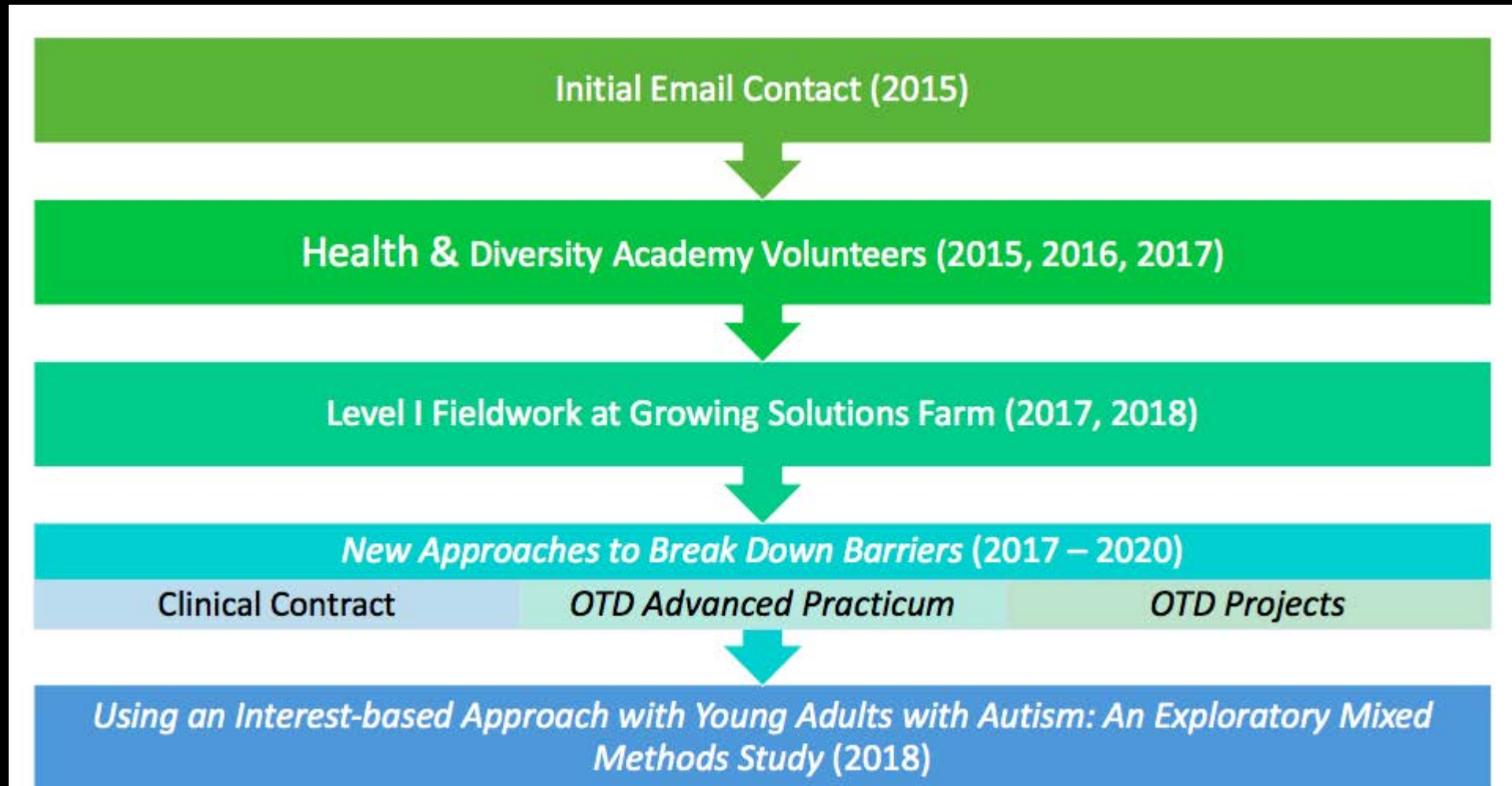
# URBAN AUTISM SOLUTIONS

*Urban Autism Solutions is dedicated to changing outcomes for young adults with autism through an integrated community life that advances social and vocational opportunities.*

- Residential Support
  - Intentional neighborhood
- Social Enterprises: Wash Dog & Growing Solutions Farm
- Social Networking
- Pre-employment transition services
  - Independent Living & Learning classes

URBAN AUTISM  
SOLUTIONS

# UIC-UAS PARTNERSHIP BACKGROUND



# New Approaches to Breaking Down Barriers

## Student Assessments

AYA-ACS

Discovery Tool

Identify Goals

BDB Summary Report

Parent Reviews Report & Goals

Intervention





# INDEPENDENT LIVING & LEARNING

- Innovative community based partnership with public high school
- Multidisciplinary staff
- Providing multidisciplinary transition planning, focusing on *participation of new occupations in context*
- Available Modules
  - Cooking
  - Community outings
  - Pre-employment training
  - Communication
  - Life skills

URBAN AUTISM  
S O L U T I O N S

	2019 ILL Class Schedule						
	Job Shadow A	Job Shadow B	Community A	Community B	Cooking	Life Skills	Communication
WEEK 1 1/15/19	Introduction: Review of Goals & Self-Determination						
WEEK 2 1/22/19	Pow Kickboxing	Target	Starbucks & L'Hours Bakery – (walking)		Chicken Quinoa and Vegetables with Fruit with rediwhip	Laundry	Introducing yourself for a great first impression
WEEK 3 1/29/19	CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER - STAFF COMPLETED BUDGETING, EMPLOYMENT PREP, AND LIBRARY CARD APPLICATIONS AT STUDENTS' SCHOOL						
WEEK 4 2/5/19	UIC Vet-CH		Chicago Public Library *New Taylor st branch!		Italian Style Turkey and Penne Toss with Fruit with frozen rediwhip	Starting Conversations	
WEEK 5 2/12/19	Rush Pre-school-MM		Grocery Store - Jewel	12th District Police Station	Chicken Fajitas with Fruit Cobbler		Social media, friendships, and work
WEEK 6 2/19/19	Paul Mitchell				Tortilla Soup with Fruit and rediwhip		Introducing yourself for a great first impression
WEEK 7 2/26/19	UIC Vet-MM		Starbucks: OT/SLP combined group	Target shopping	Spaghetti		Talking at work
WEEK 8 3/5/18	Rush Pre-School	Infiniteach	Chicago Public Library		Chili with Fruit Cobbler		Ways to enter the group to make & keep friends
WEEK 9 3/12/19	UIC Rec Center	Papa Johns	Millennium Park		Italian Style Turkey and Penne Toss with Fruit with frozen rediwhip		Social media, friendships and, work
WEEK 10 3/19/19	Prepare portfolios for final celebration						
WEEK 11 4/2/19	Wrap-Up, Review Goals and Portfolios, Celebration!						





# MY OTD PROJECT

- Development & Facilitation of Community Engagement Curriculum
  - Coffee Shop
  - Chicago Public Library
  - Grocery Shopping
  - Chicago Police Department
  - CVS Convenience Store
  - Millennium Park
- Evaluation Design & Administration
  - Instructor Reflection Tool & staff focus group
  - Collecting data to improve future programs
  - Exempt IRB – Program Evaluation (excluding CPS employees)
- Dissemination
  - *SOP Day: Integrating Self-Determination into the OT Process for Adolescents and Young Adults: Highlights from Research, Practice, and Participant Reflections*
  - *AOTA Short Course: Promoting the Self-Determination of Young Adults with Autism through Community Partnerships: Lessons Learned from Research & Practice*

# Independent Living and Learning Staff Outcomes

## Project Mission

- Incorporate self-determination models of instruction into Independent Living & Learning (ILL) classes
- Build self-efficacy among instructors
- Use staff feedback to develop & improve future classes

## Activities

Instructor Reflection Tool

ILL Modules

Focus Group

## Short Term Objectives

Staff will increase confidence in delivering transitions curricula in a community-based setting (Item #1)

Staff will increase confidence in supporting students' self-determination via: Problem solving, Decision Making, Goal setting... (Item #3)

Staff will increase confidence in supporting students' choice within ILL curricula (Item#2)

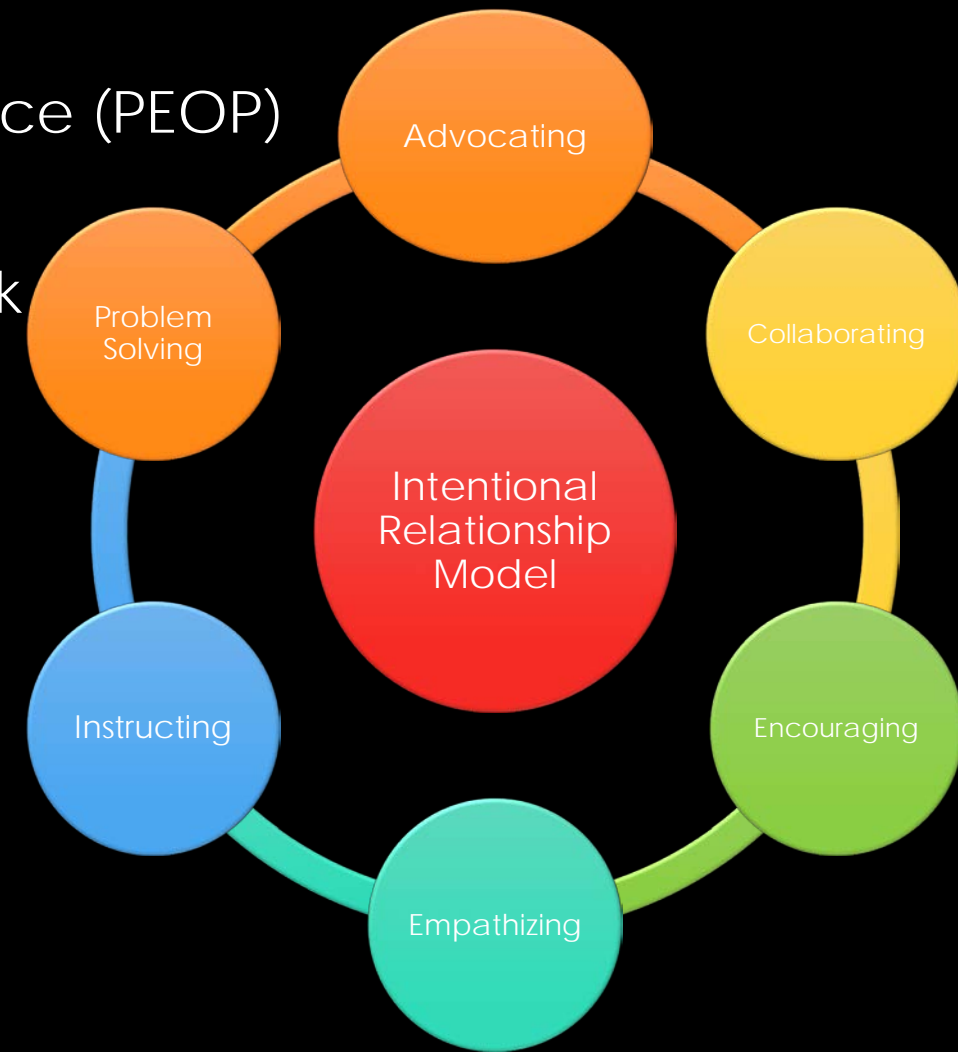
Staff will identify successful program components & areas for growth

## Long Term Objectives

- Disseminate information to transitions groups via posters and presentations (AOTA, SOP Day)
- Expand local opportunities for autistic young adults to practice self-determination within community settings
- Increase number of trained staff supporting ILL curricula in order to grow student participants

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Person – Environment – Occupation – Performance (PEOP)
- Intentional Relationship Model (IRM)
- Guided discovery, CO-OP's Goal-Plan-Do-Check

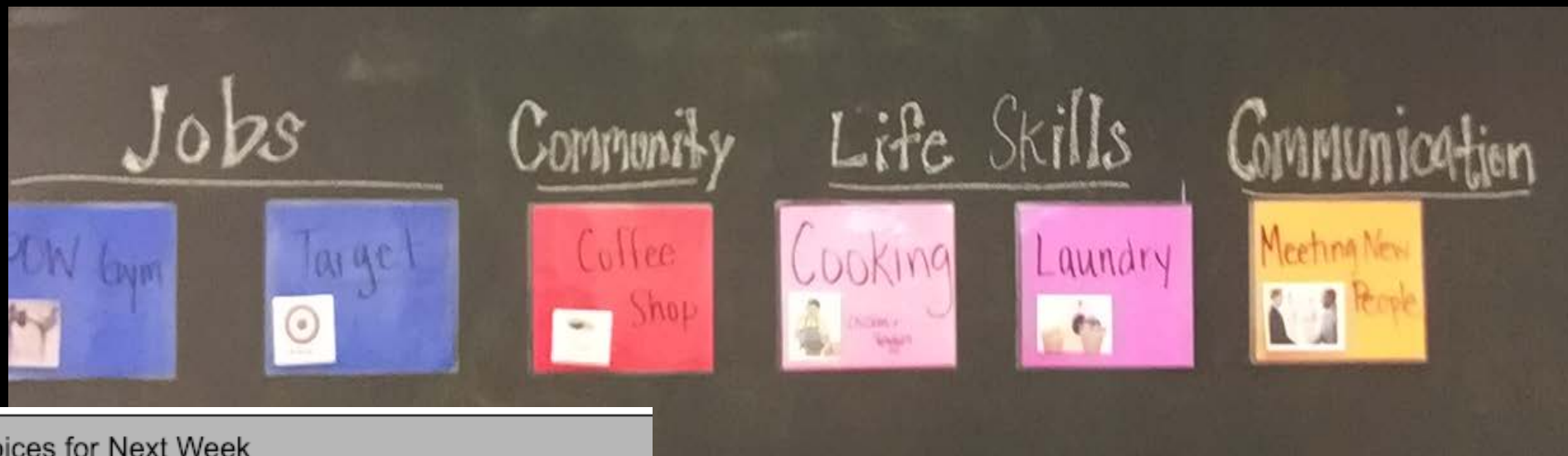


# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VISUAL AIDS

Damen	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
I will get a job and stay employed for at least 3 months.								
I will renew my Chicago Public Library card, with help from staff.								
I will find a community art or music class.								
I will learn one strategy for budgeting my money.								

ILL Class Module Key	
Employment/Job Shadowing	Communication
Library	Pre-Employment
Life Skills	Cooking
Public Transportation/Community Mobility	Finances

# CLASS SELECTION TOOLS



## My Choices for Next Week

Name: *Julie*

	Activity	Do I have a goal for this activity?	
1	<i>Coffee Shop</i>	YES	<input checked="" type="radio"/> NO
2	<i>Cooking</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	NO

# VISUAL SUPPORTS

1. Turn \_\_\_\_\_ to walk down Lexington St

2. Turn \_\_\_\_\_ onto Racine Ave. Find the \_\_\_\_\_  
CTA train stop



3. Take the \_\_\_\_\_ train towards \_\_\_\_\_ to  
\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_ stops)

4. Walk \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_



4. The \_\_\_\_\_ address is:

\_\_\_\_\_










<p>Plastic or Paper Bowls (50 bowls) *Budget \$5</p>		
<p>Corn Tortillas (3 bags) *Budget \$10</p>		
<p>Frozen Corn (4 bags) * Budget \$10</p>		
<p>Vegetable Broth (13 boxes) *Budget \$20</p>		
<p>Crushed Tomatoes (13 cans) *Budget \$10</p>		
<p>Shredded chicken (5 bags) *Budget \$30</p>		

# VISUAL SUPPORTS – GROCERY SHOPPING

# Community Outing Checklist

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Outing Location:	YES? 	NO? 
Are workers in uniform? 		
Are they on their phone? 		
Do they look at customers in the eyes when talking? 		
Is the location clean? 		
Are people talking to each other? 	<input type="checkbox"/> LOUDLY <input type="checkbox"/> quietly	

# STUDENT FEEDBACK

## Community Outing



I enjoyed the \_\_\_\_\_ outing

because...



# FINAL PORTFOLIO



# FINAL PORTFOLIO



# OTD EDUCATION & RESEARCH AWARD

- Class Visual Schedule Materials
  - Multicolored card stock, dry erase markers, Velcro, stickers
- Vocational Card Sort
- Grocery store & coffee shop outings
- Library Card Renewals
- Final Portfolio Materials

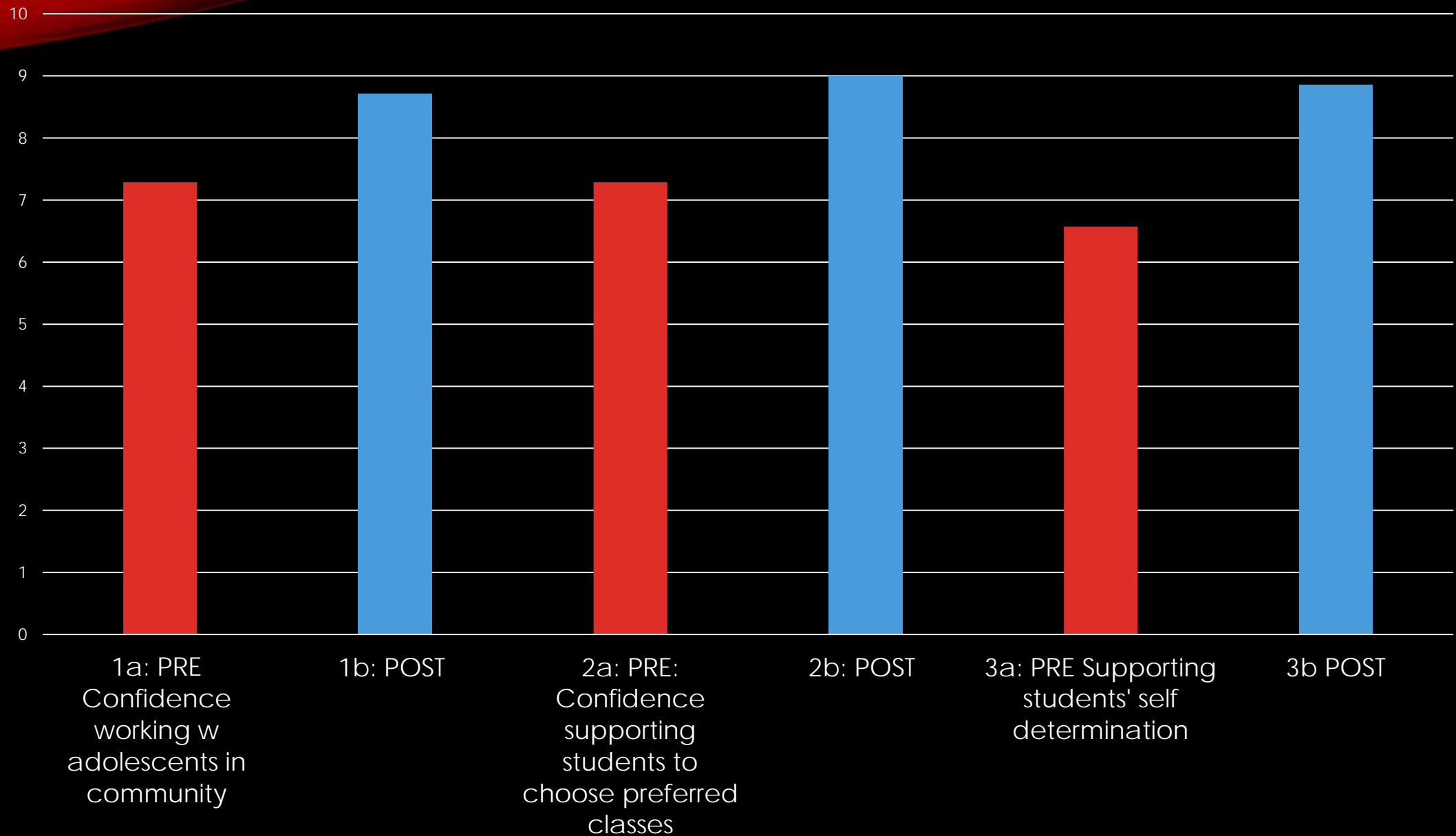




# INSTRUCTOR REFLECTION TOOL

- Adapted for a diverse audience (SLP, OT, job coach, case manager)
- 3 quantitative Pre/Post items for comparison
  - Correspond to the project's short-term objectives
- 2 Qualitative items
  - Describe self determination for transition aged young adults
  - Personal and professional growth as a result of the ILL Program

# Instructor Reflection Survey





# QUALITATIVE RESULTS

- Instructor reflection tool
  - Self-Determination: meaningful goal setting, facilitating student choice, and measurable action steps or short term goals
  - Professional Growth: increased confidence in working with students in a community setting, patience throughout the process, and improved flexibility to adapt a session to the group's needs
    - *"I felt more relaxed about implementing plans and being spontaneous, both as a supervisor and for our students"*
    - *"I became much more comfortable and confident working with these students"*
    - *"After participating in the class, I noted I needed to plan more thoroughly, especially when delegating tasks to make the experience meaningful for everybody."*



# FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

## Objectives

- At the end of this focus group, staff will reflect on positive examples of students demonstrating self-determination techniques during program groups
- At the end of this focus group, staff will identify challenges of being an instructor for the ILL program
- At the end of this focus group, staff will brainstorm program improvement items for future cycles

## Questions

- What was your most memorable part of participating in the ILL program? Please share a moment of success (while omitting identifying student information).
- What was the biggest challenge of being an instructor for the ILL program and allowing student choice?
- How can the instructor experience be improved for future cycles?
- How can the student experience be improved for next year?

# FOCUS GROUP OUTCOMES

## Recommendations

- Establish prerequisites & skill development classes
- Expand public speaking opportunities
- Support opportunities for peer modeling & leadership
- Alternating outings weeks with skill development weeks at UAS
- Amplify parent resources at UAS
- Optimize staff documentation process
- Identify manageable short-term goals
- Share objectives for each group
- Develop UAS Transitions Resource Center "menu" options

## Staff Successes

- Actualizing a grassroots idea
- Using ILL goals to expand resumes
- Seeing students make goal-directed class choices
- Increased staff confidence and flexibility
- seeing students take ownership and pride in individual goals





# INDEPENDENT LIVING AND LEARNING 2019 STAFF REFLECTION

COMPILED BY:  
EMILY KEATING, OTR/L  
OTD CANDIDATE, 2019  
MAY 2019

## ILL BY THE NUMBERS

- 21 High School participants
- 10 Morning Mediations
- 11 Library Card Goals Met
- 9 Job Outings
- 8 Community Outings
- 7 Interdisciplinary Staff Members
- 7 Communication Groups
- 7 Cooking Groups
- 4 Special Education Teachers & aides
- 2 Life Skills (Budgeting/Laundry) Groups

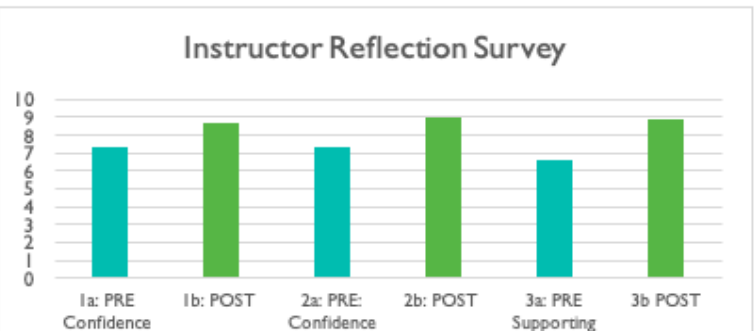


## STAFF SUCCESSES

- Actualizing a grassroots idea for the program
- Using goal writing to expand resumes
- Witnessing students make goal directed class choices
- Seeing students connect the dots from initial stages of understanding personal goals to real life experiences
- Increased confidence & improved flexibility within modules

## PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create prerequisite or skill development classes
  - Ex: sharp utensil training, money management
- Expand public speaking opportunities for students
  - Mock interviews
- Disseminate student class groupings earlier
- Adjust cooking group to students' skill level
  - Staff can prep meal prior to class when necessary
- Support opportunities for peer modeling & leadership
- Optimize staff documentation process
  - Google survey with students' participation, behavior, progress on goals
- Identify manageable short-term goals → goal acquisition
- Set objectives for each group; staff reflect on effectiveness
- Develop Transitions Resource Center "menu" options
  - Civic Engagement: opportunity to combine communication skills & self-advocacy
- Alternating outings weeks with skill development weeks at Shrine
- Amplify parent resources at UAS



# UAS SUMMARY

## ILL BY THE NUMBERS

- 21 High School participants
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# OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUED COLLABORATION

- Pursue research review board protocol with Chicago Public Schools
  - Participatory Action Research with CPS students
    - How do they envision their futures?
    - How do they define their community & themselves?
  - Collect program evaluation from teachers & students
  - Track goal progress & student outcomes
- Collaboration with disability pride/rights advocates
- Summer Fieldwork Supervisor at Growing Solutions Farm
- Continued OTD Students' involvement
- Scholarship: OT Practice articles & conference presentations



# PROJECT LIMITATIONS

- Grassroots pilot
- Lacking research protocol for students and teachers
- Small staff sample size
- Unsustained weekly staff feedback
- Low parental involvement
- Short duration



# LESSONS LEARNED

- Always include a visual aid
- Don't plan for more classes than staff available
- Be flexible, go one week at a time to avoid over-promising
- Collaborate with other professionals
- Don't spend too much time assuming what students will find interesting, chances are having them choose will work out!
- Trust the process, patience!

# SPECIAL THANKS

- OTD Committee: Theresa Carroll, Joy Hammel, Celeste Januszewski
- Urban Autism Solutions Staff & Residents
- CPS Special Education Teachers (Brian Pearson & Becky Zera) & students
- Marjani Jones, UIC OTD Program Advisor
- OTD and PhD Education and Research Award Committee
- Dr. Amy Watson, PhD & Ryan Walsh, OTR/L – statistics advisors

***QUESTIONS – COMMENTS - FEEDBACK***

