

# The Role of Occupational Therapy in Human Trafficking Survivor's Restoration



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## INTRODUCTION

Interventions implemented and delivered by occupational therapy practitioners are ideally suited as a key component for the restoration process of human traffick survivors. Survivors statistically require 7 rescues in order to successfully “leave the life.” This statistic alone makes it incredibly important that all steps required to achieve successful restoration of a trafficking survivor are carried out. Evidence of the multi-disciplined professional team approach has demonstrated some encouraging outcomes, yet, there is limited reference to the field of occupational therapy providing care (Gorman, K. & Hatceovich, B.A., 2016). Establishing interventions is critical and will require additional research and review of literature which specifically addresses human trafficking survivor interventions. Training of occupational therapy practitioners via established best practice methods is required. The end product has to be well trained occupational therapy practitioners, who are delivering interventions that ensure optimal outcomes for survivors of human trafficking. The need to educate practitioners on standardized and evidence-based interventions exists to optimize functional outcomes, quality of life and occupational performance for survivors of human trafficking.

## METHODS

This training project was developed and presented as a doctoral capstone project. The project focused on equipping and training of occupational therapy practitioners, providing them tools so in turn they would be competent and confident in providing occupational therapy interventions to human trafficking survivors. Educational materials and information were presented via live PowerPoint lecture, questions, group discussions, role playing and review of key terms (Bastable et al., 2019). Participants were chosen by way of profession and interest; individuals were required to be occupational therapy practitioners and demonstrate an interest in providing interventions to survivors. Education was provided during a one-hour lunch session. Learning was assessed through the use of pre and post-test, in addition to participant's self-assessment.

## RESULTS

Measuring the outcome of this education is based on Kirkpatrick Model, which analyzes and evaluates the results of an education program (Kirkpatrick, 2012). 7 of 9 participants demonstrated increased understanding, 1 of 9 scored the same, and 1 of 9 scored less on posttest. Scores increased 10% on average as a result of this educational program.

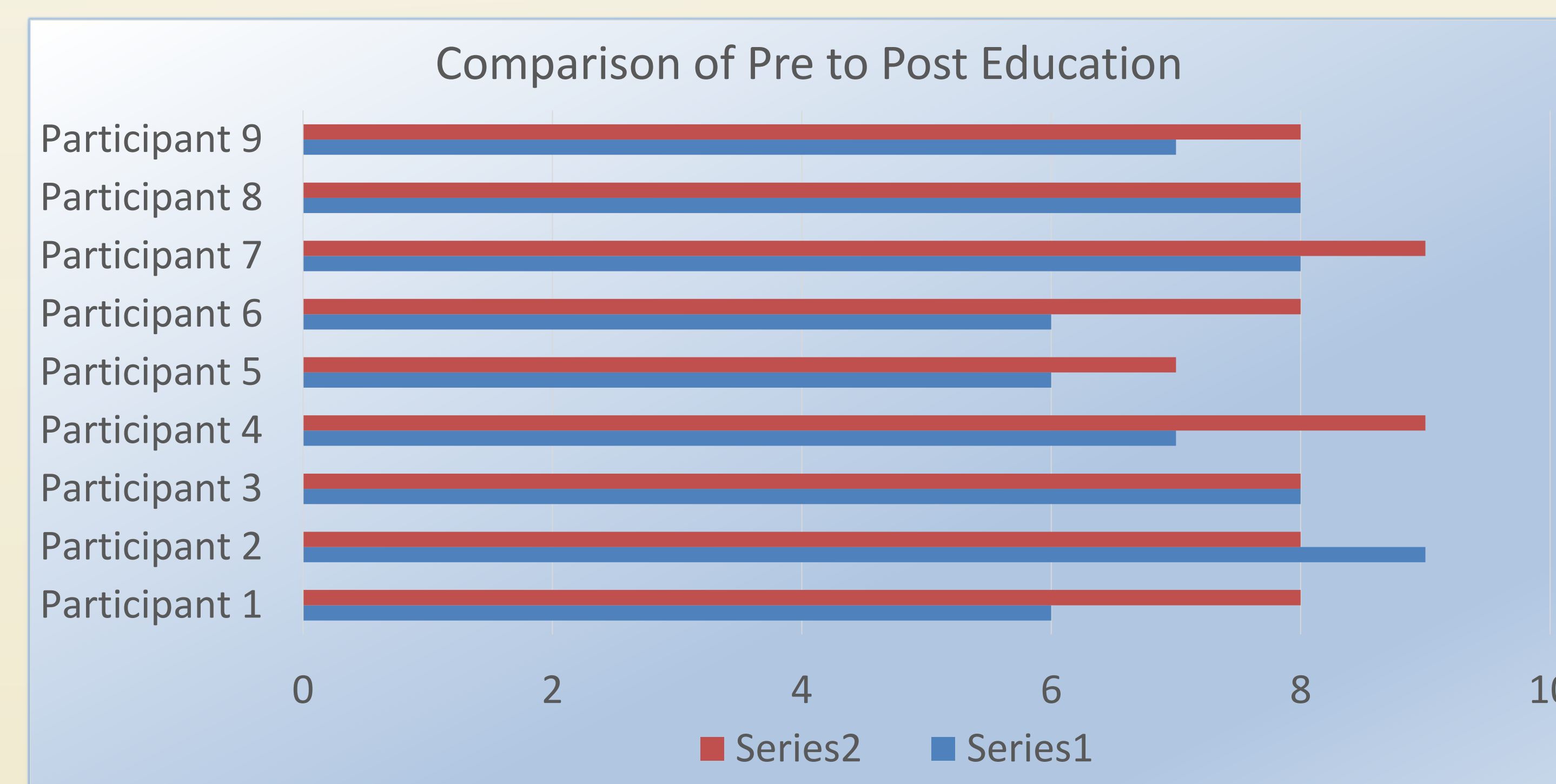


Figure 1, Comparison of scores pretest (series 1) results to posttest (series 2)

## DISCUSSION

As illustrated in Figure 1, one of the nine participants scored that same. This participant answered the same question incorrectly on both tests and answered one question correctly that was incorrect on the pre-test and answered another incorrectly on the post test. Another participant answered one more incorrectly during the post-test than on pretest. After a reconvening and discussion between participants, participants felt rushed to complete the post-test and therefore were more inclined to make mistakes. In one case, a participant skipped a question completely on the post-test as they felt pressured to complete before the hour was up. Scores demonstrated knowledge gained regarding human trafficking and survivor intervention skills was significantly improved. Participants generally expressed an engagement in this program and a passion to participate in providing intervention to human trafficking survivors as a result of this educational program.

## DISCUSSION, CON'T

Further, results demonstrate that occupational therapy practitioners have an increased understanding, awareness, improved ability to provide assessments and interventions to survivors, and increased ability to provide training to other practitioners as a result of this educational program. Overall, this educational session was successful in drawing attention to human trafficking prevalence across the United States, and, as an occupational therapy practitioner, our role in the restoration process of human trafficking survivors. As a result, occupational therapy practitioners are prepared to provide assessment and interventions as an integral component in recovery services during the restoration process of human trafficking survivors. A secondary result of this educational program emerged; occupational therapy practitioners regularly experience outcomes of improved life satisfaction for the clients in our care. Rarely are we able to participate in situations where social injustices are so great and client advocacy is a significant piece of the intervention. When providing intervention for human trafficking survivors, these components are relative and critical to the success of the restoration process. Participants overwhelmingly expressed the desire to become client advocates in order to begin the process of restoration.

## REFERENCES

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