

Community-Driven Curriculum Revision: A Collaborative Approach to Independent Living



Ellie Chesko, MOTS¹, Jenny Joo, MOTS¹, Hannah McFarlane, MOTS¹, Cherish Russell, MOTS¹
Faculty Advisor: Brittany St. John, PhD, MPH, OTR/L, Assistant Professor¹; Danbi Lee, PhD, OTR/L, Associate Professor¹; Community Mentor: Leanna Namovic, OTD, OTR/L, Programs Director ²
¹University of Washington, Division of Occupational Therapy, ²Disability Empowerment Center

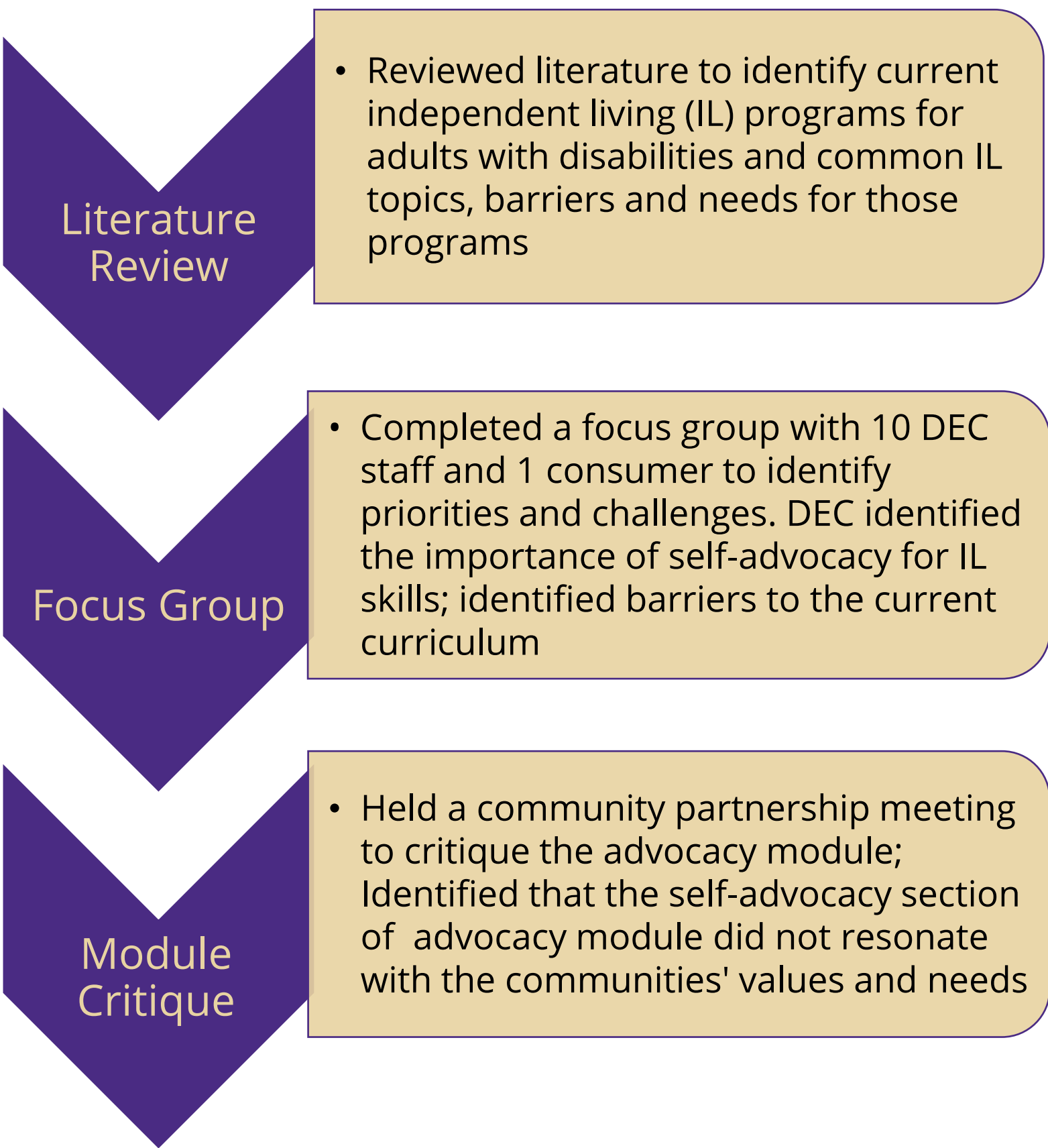
Background

- As a Center of Independent Living, the Disability Empowerment Center (DEC) provides an array of independent living services to help individuals with disabilities live independently in their community.³
- The Living Well in the Community is an online independent living curriculum that is widely used. It was created to address the need for self-management skills for goals related to independent living.^{1,3}
- The Living Well in the Community topics were well-received by DEC consumers, but the content within the curriculum did not resonate with their lived experiences.
- Using a community-based participatory research provides valuable insight as consumers are the 'experts of experience.'²

Purpose

- Modify the Living Well in the Community curriculum for the Disability Empowerment Center using research and input from DEC consumers to make the curriculum resonate more with the disability community of King County in Seattle, Washington

Needs Assessment: Process



Needs Assessment: Findings

- The curriculum lacked the Social Model of Disability
- The current language, metaphors, images and examples showed the strongest disconnect with the organization's values
- There is a need to convey the importance of: 1) meeting people where they are at 2) choice and autonomy 3) Inclusivity for a diverse range of life experiences and perspectives

"The Social Model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference." –Scope, UK organization working toward equity for the disability community

Deliverables

1. Revised Modules

- The original advocacy module was revised and expanded into two modules that fit the needs of the DEC participants: **self-advocacy** and **group-advocacy**
- Curriculum content was reframed as following:
 - Language:** Used verbiage that is more inclusive, neutral, and less assumptive of one's experience
 - Metaphors:** Avoided analogies, metaphors, and imagery that are reductive and don't assume someone's lived experience
 - Examples:** Incorporated example banks for presenters to reference to increase participant engagement
 - Opportunities:** Included various opportunities for participant involvement throughout the module

Language Suggestions	
Harmful language	Preferred language
Help	Getting support; asking for assistance
Problem	Challenge; barrier; limitation
Physical activity; strong	Active engagement; physical health

2. Step-by-Step Framework for Future Module Revisions

A framework for the DEC to follow for future module revisions detailing:

- A step-by-step guide** outlining the process of receiving feedback, identifying key focus areas, and implementing changes to the curriculum
- A synthesis of the findings** and revisions that can be implemented throughout the curriculum
- Included **a table of vocabulary** that shows more inclusive and representative language (*Language Suggestions Table*)

Considerations for modifications and implementation of future curriculum modules:

- Highlight importance of independent living by asking, 'how does this module empower a person's sense of independence?'
- Integrate the social model of disability into the lens of future critiques and updates.
- Integrate community-specific & non-ableist language.
- Continually revisit possibility for future updates by engaging consumers in collaboration to meet the dynamic and evolving needs of the community.

Conclusion

- Through integration of the key aspects of independent living that resonated with participants of Disability Empowerment Center, we created community-driven revised modules and a framework to inform future module revisions.
- We aim to support DEC participants in developing independent living skills by increasing engagement with the IL curriculum.
- The framework has the potential to facilitate a format that can be culturally relevant and can be used to inform future directions for Disability Empowerment Center and beyond.



References

- Healthy Community Living (HCL). Healthy Community Living. (2023). <https://healthycommunityliving.com/hcl/>
- Joss, N., Cooklin, A., & Oldenburg, B. (2016). A scoping review of end user involvement in disability research. *Disability and Health Journal*, 9(2), 189-196.
- Ravesloot, C., Seekins, T., Traci, M., Boehm, T., White, G., Witten, M. H., Mayer, M., & Monson, J. (2016). Living well with a disability, a self-management program. *MMWR Supplements*, 65(01), 61-67. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.su6501a10>