

2023

# The crafting community coalition: promoting female refugee well-being and self-efficacy through occupational engagement

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

SARGENT COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

Doctoral Project

**THE CRAFTING COMMUNITY COALITION:  
PROMOTING FEMALE REFUGEE WELL-BEING AND SELF-EFFICACY  
THROUGH OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Occupational Therapy

2023

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Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

– Helen Keller

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother, Janet Panico, who taught me to stand up for justice, hold compassion as my purpose, and appreciate the beauty of life.

Momma, you gave me the sun, the moon and all of the stars.

You will always be with me, every moment of every day.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*With much appreciation, I acknowledge those who were integral in my completion of this doctoral program. Dr. Karen Jacobs, the opportunity you gave me to attend the post-professional doctoral program at Boston University has altered my career and my life. Thank you for your unwavering support, enthusiasm, and inspiration. Dr. Kevin Berner, you were a beacon of light when I needed to push through the darkness. Your everlasting belief in me helped me build back the faith I needed in myself. I will forever be grateful for your kindness and encouragement. Josephine Burris, Gayla Morales, and Abi Swidergal, you've seen me through this process from the start, never doubting my ability to reach the finish line. You are a big part of my river walls, and your friendship keeps me finding the driftwood I need to push the rocks aside to let my passion and creativity flow. Each occupational therapy professional I have ever been able to learn from, practice with, and teach alongside - you have shaped my identity as a practitioner. I am honored to walk among you. All the individuals and families I have had the honor to be in service to – you have given me more than I could have ever imagined. You've taught me the value of resilience, community, persistence, and self-love. My extended family and lifelong friends – you've kept me laughing, dried my tears, and convinced me that I could do anything I set my sights on.*

*With a heart full of love, I am deeply grateful for the love and support of my father, David, sister, Susan, nephew, Elijah, and niece, Alyssa. The joy you bring me every day is all I will ever need.*

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**ABSTRACT**

The Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition (C3) aims to promote occupational engagement in female refugees by addressing occupational deprivation and marginalization. The 12-week program will join female refugee participants with occupational therapy students as interventionists, volunteer business consultants, volunteer artists, and sponsoring community-based social service organizations in a collaborative business venture. Utilizing the Community Coalition Action Theory and the Health Belief Model, C3 seeks to increase participants' perceived levels of self-efficacy and well-being by fostering entrepreneurial and self-care skills. Drawing from research that indicates the value of collective occupation, social support, and the promotion of purpose and belonging within a spiritually and culturally inclusive environment, C3 seeks to confirm occupational therapy's role as a critical discipline in refugee service provision.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACOTE .....	Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education
AOTA .....	American Occupational Therapy Association
C3 .....	Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition
CBSSO.....	Community Based Social Service Organization
FW .....	International Standards Organization
ILOTA.....	Illinois Occupational Therapy Association
OT .....	Occupational Therapist
OTA .....	Occupational Therapy Assistant
OTP.....	Occupational Therapy Practitioner
SOTA .....	Student Occupational Therapy Association
WBDC .....	Women’s Business Development Center
WFOT.....	World Federation of Occupational Therapists

## CHAPTER ONE – Introduction

### *Refugee Circumstances*

Refugees seek safety from war, civil unrest, and politically sanctioned torture in their country of origin. In 2018, 534 refugees were resettled in Cook County, Illinois; that year, 175 of those individuals eventually resettled in Chicago (Illinois Refugee Resettlement Program, 2019.) A Chicago-based social service organization reports that 301 refugees were resettled in Chicago in 2019 (Refugee One, 2020), with Chicago earning the distinction of the most welcoming city for immigrants by that same year (New American Economy, 2020). Having experienced physical, emotional, and social upheaval after enduring trauma in their country of origin, this population is at risk for the cumulative adverse effects of this displacement complicated by social isolation in their new environment. Confounded by negative media coverage about refugees, xenophobia, and lack of societal understanding, this displacement may culminate in injustices in the form of occupational deprivation and occupational marginalization (Meng et al., 2018).

Although they may be safe from physical harm, refugees now face a threat to their well-being as their ability to engage in chosen, meaningful occupations may be constricted in their new environment. The proposed program seeks to identify and recruit female refugees residing within a northwest Chicago neighborhood for

engagement in a collaborative opportunity to utilize or develop skills and occupations that will offer a sense of belonging and purpose. The program will seek to engender change in the interest of the following measurable outcomes for participants:

- Increase participant levels of life satisfaction and well-being
- Increase participant sense of self-efficacy in connecting with the larger community to increase occupational opportunities
- Decrease participant levels of depression and anxiety

In addition to addressing the needs of the above target population, this program will utilize occupational therapy students on Level II fieldwork to provide low-cost service provision and build student leadership and advocacy skills. This inclusion will address the occupational therapy field's interest in developing practitioners who can advocate for the occupational well-being of at-risk individuals and populations in accordance with the American Occupational Therapy Association's Vision 2025 (2017). Furthermore, it will provide an alternative to fieldwork opportunities in biomedical settings.

### *Consequences of the Problem*

Studies have suggested that depression is prevalent in nearly one-quarter of the refugee population (Ao et al., 2016). This number may underrepresent refugees not receiving services because of a lack of community outreach or sustained

participation in mental health programs (Ballard-Kang et al., 2018). Furthermore, being granted refugee status by the United States government may take months to years (National Immigration Forum, 2018), delaying individuals the documentation needed to obtain employment or enroll in school. Research in this area suggests that being denied permission to work, unemployment, discrimination, and social isolation negatively impact the well-being of refugees (Hocking, 2018). These factors contribute to social isolation and occupational deprivation, impacting individual role performance, family functioning, and the progression of the interest of the refugee population as a whole.

### *Occupational Therapy and Refugees*

The problem faced by the refugee population reflects occupational needs, as suggested by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2017) and the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT, 2014), delineating that these needs fall under the scope of occupational therapy practice. In a position paper, WFOT addresses human displacement as a detriment to occupational opportunity, asserting that "displacement is prolonged by socially and politically constructed barriers to full and fair occupational participation" (WFOT, 2014). In addition, AOTA's Vision 2025 calls upon professional members to be influential leaders in promoting the "well-being and quality of life for all people, population, and

communities" in a collaborative, culturally responsive, and inclusive manner. (AOTA, 2017). Both statements are a clear call to action for practitioners to address occupational injustices such as those experienced by the refugee population.

### *Factors Contributing to the Problem*

The following factors contribute to occupational injustice (deprivation and marginalization) in the re-homed refugee population leading to a decreased sense of well-being and life satisfaction and an increased report of depression and anxiety:

- Refugees have experienced significant trauma in their country of origin, which may contribute to a decline in mental health as a baseline level of functioning prior to immigration and re-homing.
- After immigrating to a new country, refugees experience deprivation from meaningful occupations due to a lack of opportunity caused by delays in government documentation which often takes several months to years to obtain. These delays leave individuals unable to obtain gainful employment or attend school, which may lead to financial instability and social isolation.
- Xenophobia and lack of understanding of the refugee population may be prevalent within the new community, leading to social and occupational marginalization, which may contribute to a decreased sense of belonging and lead to mental health decline in the population.

- Female refugees may be further disadvantaged, as those resettled in new countries often have low education and health literacy levels and few skills outside of farming and trading, leaving them with a narrow pathway to obtain sustained occupational well-being. (Felsman, 2016)

### *Proposed Solution*

This program seeks to identify and recruit female refugees residing within a northwest Chicago neighborhood for engagement in a collaborative opportunity to utilize or develop skills and occupations that will offer a sense of belonging and purpose. In the interest of the well-being of female refugees, the proposed program seeks to partner with community-based social service organizations (CBSSO) that aid refugees. The program will incorporate the following components:

1. The proposed program seeks to offer female refugees a pathway to occupational justice based on the occupational therapy philosophy that "doing, being, becoming, and belonging" contributes to perceived quality of life as analyzed and described by Whalley Hammell (2014).
2. The program will be grounded in leisure as the targeted area of occupation and will utilize existing participant skills related to arts and crafts. Facilitation of opportunities for those skills to be shared and taught to others will be carried out within a group context that offers social participation and support (Gillam,

2018).

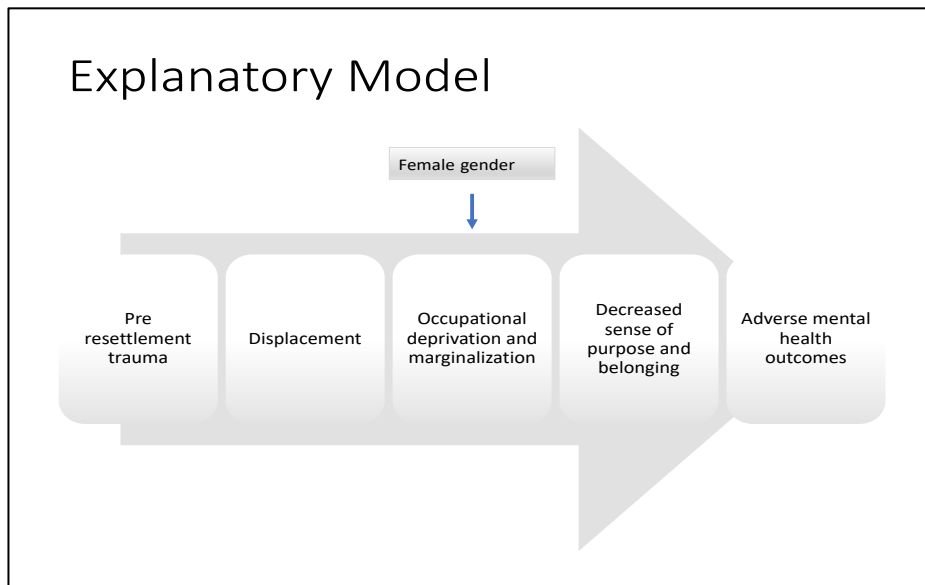
3. The program will utilize a collaborative approach through a coalition that engages crafters in creating, marketing, and selling unique, handmade items (Eggert et al., 2015). This coalition will include the following:
  - Level II Occupational therapy students as interventionists, offering low to no-cost service provision as well as an opportunity for students to develop advocacy skills within a nontraditional setting (Gat & Ratzon, 2014)
  - Local artists/artisans as consultants who will contribute to all aspects of creating handmade items that they will sell in the community and through an online platform
  - Business consultants who will guide participants in learning all aspects of running a nonprofit enterprise.

Proceeds from sales will enhance future group offerings. Participation in chosen and meaningful occupations, contribution to the social and economic interests of the group, and social interaction will foster a sense of shared purpose and contribution to a larger purpose within the target population.

## CHAPTER TWO – Project Theoretical and Evidence Base

### *Overview Of Proposed Explanatory Model*

The Person -Environmental-Occupation-Performance Model of Practice offers a framework to understand refugee psychological well-being as one impacted by a complex interaction between characteristics, experiences, ability to acculturate to the new environment, and the environment's ability to foster occupational engagement (Law et al., 1996). Inherent to the collective sources of trauma in refugees, occupational injustice is a detriment to health and well-being. The explanatory model, therefore, presents occupational injustice as a mediating variable between abject compound trauma and adverse mental health outcomes. This model also offers gender as a moderating variable, supposing females are at increased risk for negative mental health outcomes. Figure 2.1 provides a visual representation of the explanatory model.

**Figure 2.1**

The following research questions illustrate constructs from the explanatory model:

1. Is there evidence that pre- and post-migration factors cause compound trauma to the detriment of the mental health of displaced persons?
2. Is there evidence that occupational injustice is inherent in various forms of compound trauma contributing to adverse mental health outcomes?
3. Is there evidence that female refugees experience a higher degree of occupational injustice that places them at increased risk for adverse mental health outcomes?

*Refugees and Compound Trauma*

Multiple studies have provided evidence that exposure to trauma before, during, and after migration leads to psychological distress, with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) being the most clinically significant pathology. According to AlRefaie and Dowrick, exposure to pre-migration trauma such as war, violence, torture, displacement, and exile accounts for the high prevalence of PTSD, with rates as high as 66% of the refugee population (2021). Kirmeyer et al. (2011) found that refugees are at a significantly higher risk than the general population for psychological distress due to adversity during migration trajectories and post-migration factors that lead to ambiguity and insecurity about the future. Sinnerbrink et al. (1997) and Schweitzer et al. (2006) suggest a dose-response relationship between trauma and psychological distress wherein adverse mental health levels rise with increased exposure to trauma.

The concept that trauma may compound, in which distressing post-migration factors exacerbate baseline trauma levels caused by pre-migration factors and lead to progressively worse outcomes for refugees, is validated by multiple sources. Slewa-Younan et al. (2015) found that adverse mental health outcomes in refugees may be influenced not only by pre-migration experiences alone but "as a result of complex interaction with the post-migration cultural dislocation" (p. 1238). George (2012)

reports that safety and well-being concerns persist after resettlement, confounded by feelings of loss, guilt, anger, frustration, isolation, and hopelessness. Many studies pointed to the delayed ability to work or attend school while host countries process documents as a great source of distress (Hocking, 2018; Kim, 2016; Kirmeyer et al., 2011; Slewa-Younan et al., 2015). Others cited displacement, discrimination, and social isolation as mental health determinants impacting the well-being of refugees (Hassan et al., 2016; Huot et al., 2016). Evidence that legal delays and acculturative discord lead to psychological distress supports the argument that occupational deprivation may mediate between compound trauma and adverse mental health outcomes.

Many studies discussed above were conducted through subjective questionnaires, and data may be skewed due to language or literacy barriers and subject bias. An additional limitation noted within the current literature is the small sample size and lack of diversity within the sample. Multiple studies focused on refugees from one nation only, with response data possibly reflecting cultural homogeneity.

### *Occupational Injustice, Compound Trauma, and Mental Health*

Many studies were located that discuss displacement from physical, social, and cultural contexts as a great source of psychological distress. Whiteford (2005) suggests

that occupational disruption and deprivation from one's meaningful occupations, arising from the sociopolitical phenomenon, poses a long-term threat to refugee well-being, supporting the connection between occupational injustice and adverse mental health outcomes made in the explanatory model. In addition, Hainmueller et al. (2016) report that the long wait to receive governmental documentation allowing a refugee to work or attend school is detrimental to cultural immersion and, ultimately, psychosocial adjustment.

A study completed by Crawford et al. (2016) provides a correlation between the personal characteristics of refugees, the social structures present in the resettlement community, government policy, and resulting occupational deprivation. This connection supports the hypothesis that occupational injustice is a mediating link between the compound trauma imposed by resettlement and diminished mental health outcomes. Finally, Mayne et al. (2016) argue that occupational engagement is fundamental to the well-being of refugees yet may be compromised by government policies, lack of a predictable routine, and societal prejudice.

While the evidence above suggests a link between occupational injustice and adverse mental health outcomes, additional research in this area would be beneficial. Studies within the occupational therapy field were limited by small sample sizes, with one study being a single case which may have been subject to researcher and subject bias.

Studies focused on government document wait times are outside the field of occupational therapy and required this author to make inferences regarding psychosocial adjustment and occupational engagement.

### *Female Refugees and Occupational Injustice*

Multiple studies corroborated this aspect of the hypothesis with rationales including a higher risk for pre-settlement trauma involving physical and sexual violence (Kim et al. 2013) and a higher risk for post-settlement social and occupational marginalization (Song et al. 2018). Felsman (2016) supports reducing occupational marginalization as a central factor in female refugee well-being, reporting that lower education level and employment-related skill deficiency are both associated with higher levels of post-settlement distress. In addition, compromised identity and role performance correlate with higher levels of psychological distress in female refugees (Whitaker et al., 2005, Rometsch-Ogioun El Sount et al., 2018). As further support, a study by Vromans et al. (2018) found that female refugees report lower levels of self-efficacy than their male counterparts and are more likely to face higher degrees of post-settlement oppression.

The studies located specifically on female refugees were limited. Largely qualitative, most studies included a small sample where data was obtained through semi-structured interviews and subjective questionnaires, leaving the data subject to

researcher and subject bias. In addition, studies often relied on snowball recruitment methods which may not reach the most socially marginalized or may suggest a lack of cultural diversity in the subject sample. Finally, gender norm expectations may have led to differences in subject reports of psychological distress.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, a synthesis of current research on this topic yielded support for the research questions and, thus, the explanatory model. Although subject to limitations such as small sample size, cultural homogeneity, the potential for researcher and subject bias, and omission of confounding factors, the studies located reinforced this author's hypothesis that occupational injustice is a mediating variable between pre- and post-settlement compound trauma and adverse mental health outcomes.

## **CHAPTER THREE – Overview of Current Approaches and Methods**

### *Introduction*

With a growing number of refugees globally, communities will need to offer safe harbor for individuals and families forced to migrate due to political unrest. As the previously described literature indicates, refugees experience a degree of negative impact on mental health commensurate with the summative trauma they experienced (Schweitzer et al., 2006; Slewa-Younan et al., 2015) at a more significant rate than the general population (Kirmeyer et al., 2011). Furthermore, female refugees experience higher rates than their male counterparts (Robertson et al., 2006, Rometsch-Ogioun El Count et al., 2018). These adverse mental health outcomes correlate with occupational injustice in the form of deprivation and marginalization (Huot et al., 2016; Hainmeuller et al., 2016). The proposed program intends to provide a community-based program to bridge the well-being gap for female refugees through occupational participation.

### *The Benefit of Occupational Engagement in the Refugee Population*

Studies consistently support the value of occupation in establishing life satisfaction and well-being and illustrate occupational deprivation's deleterious impact on health (Wilcock, 1993; Whiteford, 2000, 2005, Hammell, 2014, 2017). The available literature supports the hypothesis that occupational engagement may

promote mental health and well-being in the refugee population by the available literature. Bishop and Purcell (2013) discuss the “doing, being, (and) belonging” (p. 256) that are inherent to occupational engagement and suggest that together these actions can facilitate a person’s “becoming.” The current research is focused on this dynamic process when examining the value of occupation in the refugee population.

Many published articles focus on the damaging effect of occupational deprivation, thus supporting the provision of programs that foster occupation as a matter of human dignity. According to (Mayne et al., 2016, p. 205), “the opportunity to engage in meaningful occupation is considered a fundamental human right and a matter of justice,” supporting occupational engagement in the refugee population as a matter of social justice. Moreover, Whiteford (2000) argues that prolonged occupational deprivation compromises the dynamic that engenders self-efficacy and identity as developed through engagement in activities one finds meaningful. As discussed in a previous literature analysis, refugees often experience adverse mental health outcomes due in part to involuntary abandonment of pre-migration occupations and barriers to the performance of ideal post-migration occupations. After reviewing the evidence, it would be reasonable to conclude that providing a pathway to occupational engagement may promote mental well-being and increase life satisfaction. The literature analysis also suggests two aspects of occupational

engagement that may provide a more concrete pathway to aid refugees in circumventing occupational deprivation: occupational adaptation and collective occupation. (McCarthy et al., 2020; Raanaas et al., 2018; Ramungo & Kronenberg, 2015).

McCarthy et al. (2020) consider occupational adaptation critical to bridging the well-being gap and rebuilding a sense of belonging and identity after resettlement. As forced migration disrupts many of the roles, routines, and social and cultural norms that previously offered purpose and predictability, refugees must make occupational changes while having minimal control over the length and quality of the process. With predictability and structure diminished, fostering occupational adaptation in refugees is imperative to optimal life participation and well-being after resettlement (Raanaas et al., 2018). Furthermore, occupational deprivation, and subsequent poor mental health outcomes, may arise if these crucial adaptations are not realized (McCarthy et al., 2020). Shaw et al. (2012) highlight the premise that “people are inherently occupational” and suggest that participation in collective occupations can strengthen social structures and convey cultural practices (p.391). Hancock et al. (2015) describe occupations meaningful to refugees as those that “promote companionship, connection, and a sense of contributing to and being valued by others” (p.514). Collective occupation, in particular, may be highly significant as

refugees value keeping busy and maintaining a sense of competence but are also more likely to thrive in an atmosphere where belonging and community are prioritized (Ramungo & Kronenberg, 2015). Additionally, opportunities to serve others competently often engender personal satisfaction, meaning, and purpose (Smith, 2018), supporting the use of a collective occupational forum to promote self-efficacy. This factor buffers distress and determines refugee well-being (Morina et al., 2018), and is an integral aspect of the proposed program this research intends to inform.

In summary, the literature suggests that occupational engagement may offer a buffering effect for refugees faced with devastating life disruption, displacement, and varied forms of loss by providing a sense of purpose, belonging, structure, and connection to identity, shaping cultural and spiritually meaningful activity. (Huot et al. 2016, Hurly 2019, Smith 2015). Analysis of the literature concludes that a program seeking to increase refugee psychological well-being should promote occupational engagement and involve refugees in collective occupation (Ramungo & Kronenberg, 2015), with a primary goal being successful occupational adaptation (McCarthy et al., 2020). Limitations of the literature include small sample sizes, subject and researcher bias, and lack of consistently reported specificity of types of occupation used within the research. Although the literature clarifies that occupational engagement is optimal, more research may be helpful regarding the benefit of specific occupations

such as crafting, cooking, team sports, et cetera.

*Optimal Programming for Refugee Occupational Engagement*

Occupational adaptation is one avenue to foster occupational engagement. Studies suggest that promoting such resilience requires the cultivation of belonging, purpose, and continuity, all of which may be effective in buffering the deleterious effects of displacement and life uncertainty. Ekstam et al. describe an optimal setting in which refugees may meet the need for purpose and accomplishment through engagement in “different kinds of doing...mastered new skills, and (meeting) the expectations of others and their own goals (2021, p.152-153). Highlighting the value of social support as critical to refugees’ well-being and mental health (Spicer, 2008; Renner et al., 2012; van Heemstra et al., 2019; James, 2021; Correa-Velez et al., 2010), studies support the use of collective occupation in fostering predictable life roles, routines, and occupational identities. A sense of empowerment and connection with others may develop through this process.

Culturally and spiritually informed interventions correlate positively with refugee mental health (Im & Swan, 2020; Blignault et al., 2020) and may also promote interconnectedness between refugee clients (Pandya, 2018). Analysis of the literature also suggests that a socially robust context is most effective when programming is mindful of cultural and spiritual safety. Therefore, environments that support

engagement in familiar social and cultural practices offset occupational deprivation's negative impact and encourage the imperative interrelation to provide refugees with a sense of belonging and purpose. In summary, programs that foster resilience and self-efficacy within mindfully spiritual, cultural, and social contexts may maximize optimal refugee mental health.

Most studies described above were carried out with small sample sizes and were also subject to researcher and subject bias. In addition, research studies on the effective use of specific occupation-based tenets are limited. There appears to be an opening in the literature for studies involving models that guide occupational therapy practice, such as the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) or the Person-Environment-Performance-Occupation (PEOP) Model.

### *Occupational Marginalization of Female Refugees*

Evidence was found and previously reported on by this author suggesting that female refugees are at a greater risk for psychological distress. In comparison, and somewhat surprisingly given the strength of the evidence, studies that describe optimal interventions with female refugees were found to be sparse. It could also be reasonably surmised from the literature that female refugees' psychosocial needs are similar to those of their male counterparts. However, careful analysis suggests there are meaningful differences. For example, studies examining female refugees in specific

highlighted social support as a determinant of well-being (Felsman, 2016; Hurly, 2019; Millican et al., 2019) and the value of social connectedness in retaining shared cultural and spiritual experience (Riggs et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). Although this evidence is a helpful informant to holistic programming, it does not alone provide information that would not otherwise be true for the entire refugee population, regardless of gender.

Hurly (2019) suggests that culturally based gender roles impact a female refugee's occupational choices, which diminished under the overwhelming burden of domestic duties. Additionally, Riggs et al. (2017) describe refugee women's tendency to "graciously accept" services offered to them versus seeking resources that may promote their well-being, attributing this to a lack of self-efficacy compared with their male counterparts. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that culturally imposed occupational imbalance, present in pre- and post-migration circumstances, may disproportionately limit female refugees from doing, being, belonging, and becoming. As there does not appear to be existing occupational therapy-based literature addressing this, a reasonable future hypothesis may involve how self-efficacy impacts female refugees' well-being. A model of occupational therapy practice recognizing gender-related bias in a multi-level context may therefore inform interventions that effectively address occupational marginalization. There is

also limited literature to support methods of reducing the marginalization of female refugees, which is significant considering they are at the center of intersecting forms of oppression. Bailey (2012) describes the position of female refugees as “constructed by several axes of differentiation and inequality - nationality, class, gender, ethnicity” (p. 6 and further suggests that “subordination and disempowerment” (p. 9) dominate the pre and post-migration life experiences of refugee women. Although this phenomenon may arguably be the most significant factor limiting female refugees’ pre and post-migration occupational engagement, only two of the eight articles reviewed discussed it as a critical intervention area.

### *Conclusion*

This doctoral project intends to provide a community-based program aimed at increasing the occupational engagement of female refugees in the interest of promoting their positive mental health outcomes and well-being. Analysis of the reviewed literature suggests that optimal intervention would foster social interaction, welcome cultural and spiritual expression, and be mindful of the stigma and prejudice participants may face. Already marginalized, outreach efforts may be beneficial and necessary to promote participation. Utilizing collective occupations such as the group enterprise suggested by this doctoral project may be beneficial in establishing roles and routines to promote a sense of self-efficacy and belonging. Finally, perhaps most

informative to this program is the incorporation of the concept of occupational adaptation through which female refugees may begin to view themselves as empowered, capable, and hopeful.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – Description of the Proposed Program**

### *Introduction*

This chapter describes the overarching framework of the Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition (C3) and communicates the program's theoretical foundation, structure, and objectives. The coalition's purpose is to transform the meaningful action of multiple industries to enhance the well-being of female refugees. Although developed from an occupational therapy perspective, this chapter describes the collaborative efforts of the varied stakeholders that will enable the coalition's success. These contributors include occupational therapy students, social services professionals from community-based social service organizations (CBSSO), local artists and artisans, business consultants and entrepreneurs, and of course, the participants themselves. The overall purpose of the coalition is to engender well-being and self-efficacy in female refugees as they acclimate to their resettlement community through engagement in a collaborative art and crafts-based business venture.

### *Refugees and Well-being*

Refugees seek safety from war, civil unrest, and politically sanctioned torture in their country of origin. Having experienced physical, emotional, and social upheaval after enduring trauma in their country of origin, this population is at risk for the cumulative adverse effects of this displacement complicated by social isolation in

their new environment. Confounded by negative media coverage about refugees, xenophobia, and lack of societal understanding, this displacement may culminate in injustices in the form of occupational deprivation and occupational marginalization. Although they may be safe from physical harm, refugees now face a threat to their well-being as their ability to engage in chosen, meaningful occupations may largely be constricted in their new environment (WFOT, 2014). The World Federation of Occupational Therapy describes human displacement as a detriment to occupational opportunity, arguing that "displacement is prolonged by socially and politically constructed barriers to full and fair occupational participation" (WFOT, 2014, p. 1).

Studies have suggested that depression is prevalent in nearly one-quarter of the refugee population (Ao et al., 2016). However, this number may underrepresent refugees who are not receiving services because of a lack of community outreach or sustained participation in mental health programs (Ballard-Kang et al., 2018).

Furthermore, being granted refugee status by the United States government may take months to years (National Immigration Forum, 2018), delaying individuals the documentation needed to obtain employment or enroll in school. Research in this area suggests that being denied permission to work, unemployment, discrimination, and social isolation negatively impact the well-being of refugees (Hocking, 2017).

Female refugees may be disadvantaged, as those resettled in new countries often have

low education and health literacy levels and few marketable skills (Felsman, 2016), leaving them with a narrow pathway to obtain sustained occupational well-being. Therefore, C3 intends to promote the self-efficacy and well-being of female refugees. This project seeks to identify and recruit female refugees residing within a northwest Chicago neighborhood for engagement in a collaborative opportunity to utilize or develop skills and occupations that will offer a sense of belonging and purpose.

### *Program Purpose and Objectives*

C3 seeks to offer female refugee clients (crafters or participants) a pathway to occupational justice based on the occupational therapy philosophy that "doing, being, becoming, and belonging" contribute to perceived quality of life as analyzed and described by Hammell (2014, p. 40). C3 is grounded in leisure as the targeted area of occupation, and coalition members will utilize existing crafter skills and facilitate opportunities for those skills to be shared and taught to others. Additionally, the program will unite crafters with occupational therapy students as interventionists, local artists, and business consultants to engage crafters in creating, marketing, and selling unique and handmade items. Volunteer business consultants will work with crafters to market and sell products and will be essential coalition members through bolstering elements of entrepreneurship and enterprise. Crafters will engage in a twelve-week program where they will be encouraged to learn skills, including artistic

design and construction of products, website development, basic bookkeeping, marketing, and sales. C3 will seek to offer a myriad of options to be self-selected by participants based on their interests or current skills. Occupational therapy student practitioners will aid participants in choosing activities by administering an interest checklist and conducting an occupational profile. In addition to artistic and commerce skills, occupational therapy students will guide participants in learning self-care skills such as mindfulness, meditation, and yoga. Through robust opportunities for skill exploration and development, C3 will become a platform for self-expression, social interaction, routine, structure, and collaborative purpose.

Proceeds from the sale of products will fund and enhance future group offerings, including procuring a wider variety of raw materials or expanding offerings through the C3 website. Through participation in chosen and meaningful occupations, contribution to the social and economic interests of the coalition itself, and social interaction that fosters a sense of shared purpose, the program seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

- Increase participant levels of life satisfaction and well-being
- Increase participant's sense of self-efficacy in connecting with the larger community to increase occupational opportunities
- Decrease participant levels of depression and anxiety

*Theories Guiding Program Development*

The Health Belief Model (HBM) provides a framework to understand the intrapersonal factors that impact the well-being of refugees. It also reflects the client-centered philosophy of occupational therapy. Although the program seeks to intervene at the group level, individual members must have the opportunity to evaluate strengths as well as factors that present barriers to health and well-being. To result in lasting change, the program must alter each crafter's perception of her self-efficacy to impact her well-being. Utilizing the HBM, a study completed by Meng et al. (2018) found that to successfully empower refugees to make decisions that affirm their well-being, programs must consider personal beliefs related to culture, religion, and spirituality and the impact of the environment on physical and emotional safety. Therefore, crafters must be confident that the coalition is mindful of their physical and emotional safety.

Additionally, provided services should incorporate cultural and spiritual domains. Studies have shown freedom to express spirituality as a reinforcing factor supporting refugee mental health (Pandya, 2018). Likewise, freedom from discrimination is a health determinant for the population (Bond et al., 2007). Felsman (2016) reports that crucial components of health promotion programs for female refugees ensure an environment of "safety, trust, and inclusion." Using the HBM as a

guide, this author conducted a brief social assessment through phone interviews with a CBSSO employee and two female refugee clients. The themes that emerged from these interviews reflected data in the published literature that centers around the desire to feel accepted by the larger community, connect with others, and engage in purposeful activity.

One client expressed feeling that she was without purpose due to government documentation holding her up from working or going to school. She seemed to recognize this barrier but saw involvement with the CBSSO as a contributor to her well-being. Referring to her connection with the center, she stated, "I am alone, except for friends."

Eggert (2015) describes effectual coalition building as incorporating the viewpoints and skills of individuals who are experts in their respective areas into a common purpose or goal. C3 will collaborate with participant crafters, occupational therapy students, artists, and business consultants. Therefore, the Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) provides an appropriate guiding framework. The findings of a community gardening research project based on the CCAT suggests that sharing resources to create a synergistic effort allowed the coalition to achieve outcomes that any one of the members could not achieve alone (Eggert, 2015). Refer to table 4.1 for the roles and responsibilities of coalition members.

**Table 4.1**

<b>Coalition Member</b>	<b>Program Contribution</b>
Community Based Social Service Organization	Serve as the <i>champion</i> on the program (described by Eggert, et al as the lead agency) to provide an environment participants know to be safe and supportive; provide physical space for group meetings/crafting, provide validity to the program as an established community service organization
Participant crafters	Utilize skills to make products to sell; teach other participants skills to enable participation; share personal and cultural values that will inform programming; provide feedback on all aspects of the program to inform outcomes evaluation
OT/OTA students	Complete occupational profiles and interest checklists that will be utilized to identify participant skills; collaborate with participants on adaptations needed to ensure participation is enabled for all who are interested; identify and secure community resources (shop owners, community event planners, artists) using an advocacy-based model
Local artists/crafters	Provide their time and talents on a volunteer basis to guide crafters in developing and honing skills, creating products and expressing creativity
Local entrepreneurs and business consultants	Provide group-based educational opportunities on various aspects of starting and maintaining a nonprofit business, including financial management, marketing, sales, and website development.

*Program Content and Evidence Base*

Table 4.2 provides an example of the existing literature used in theoretical analysis. Please refer to Chapter 3 for a complete analysis of the literature that informed the development of this project.

Table 4.2

Program Content	Theoretical Grounding	Evidence Base
Utilization of a community-based initiative as a means of curating social support, belonging, shared goal	Cooperative efforts can lead to beneficial outcomes for all; a familiar community organization contributes to a feeling of physical and emotional safety; A sense of belonging and purpose in subjective well-being/life satisfaction.	Eggert et al (2015). Coalition building for health: A community garden pilot project with apartment dwelling refugees, <i>Journal of Community Health Nursing</i> , 32:3, 141-150.
Utilization of crafting as a means of doing, being, and creating	Leisure based/arts/crafting leads to enhanced sense of wellbeing	Gillam, T. (2018). Enhancing public mental health and wellbeing through creative arts participation. <i>Journal of Public Mental Health</i> , 17 (4), 148-156.
Incorporation of spirituality, culturally sensitive, trauma informed programming	Refugee mental health is impacted by their ability to feel accepted and free from discrimination based on culture or religion	Pandya, S. P. (2018) Spirituality for mental health and well-being of adult refugees in Europe. <i>Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health</i> , 20, 1396-1403.

*Administrative Assessment and Plan*

Support of the CBSSO will be critical to the success of this program. By providing support, CBSSOs and their clients have the distinction of serving and being served by the program. In addition to serving as a source of program referrals, the center will provide needed physical space for crafting groups. Furthermore, volunteering local artists' time, efforts, and talents will be crucial resources to the program's success. As experts in their field, they can enable crafters to source and construct materials that allow expressive creativity and create handiwork that will appeal to local shop owners and their customers. Finally, Occupational therapy (OT) fieldwork students will play a vital role in this program. From organizing fundraisers, building community connections, utilizing therapeutic use of self as they interact with participants, and providing an occupation-minded philosophy to the program, student efforts will be the program's most significant resource at little to no cost on the CBSSO's behalf.

*Evaluation Plan/Outcomes Measures*

As this program relies on the involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders, it will be imperative to develop, monitor, and evaluate all aspects of the program from the perspective of each to determine how each group derives a sense of value from program participation. This includes the priority population themselves, as well as

other members of the coalition who will be engaging in meaningful interaction with participants. Ensuring OT students perceive a positive fieldwork experience that meets their learning goals through involvement with this program will be crucial to maintaining their participation. Community members (shop owners, event organizers, CBSSO) will also need to perceive value from participation to ensure their continued efforts which will be vital to the program's success. Qualitative and quantitative data garnered through surveys and focus groups informing program changes and enhancements. As the objectives of the program center on the well-being of participants, quantitative data will be collected using tools that measure subjective well-being and self-efficacy. Qualitative data will be collected using semi-structured interviews and focus groups and then analyzed for themes related to the program's objectives. Finally, measuring the program's success will involve its ability to sustain itself financially, which will require the cooperative efforts of all stakeholders. Therefore, accounting software will track the program's proceeds and ongoing financial sustainability.

### *Review of the Proposed Program*

The development of the Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition considers current literature that suggests a positive impact of community-based initiatives on refugee well-being. A mini-social assessment suggested the benefit of a program such as C3.

However, access to larger participant samples was limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional focus groups and interviews would benefit program development, considering the information gained from the literature review.

The theories presented in this manual represent only a fraction of those that informed this project. Among those not discussed in this doctoral project is The Social Change Model of Leadership Development, which provides a fitting framework for preparing students to develop the skills needed to be agents of change for the priority population. Furthermore, while the HBM and the CCAT guide the development of the program, concepts from Social Cognitive Theory and the Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance have inspired the social, emotional, and behavioral changes inherent to the program's hypothesis.

Finally, the success of this program will depend on the ongoing investment of all coalition members. Organizing and focusing a diverse group toward one common goal may prove challenging as each member will operate from a unique perspective. Although it seems ideal that all members would harmoniously work together to enhance the well-being of the women the program serves, a barrier to overcome may be maintaining focus on that objective versus the goals and interests of individual coalition members.

*Conclusion*

This program description intends to provide readers with an understanding of the purpose and objectives of the Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition as well as the theoretical frameworks and evidence base that shaped its development. Moreover, it offers the hypothesis that female refugees will derive a sense of well-being and self-efficacy from participating in a community-based program that utilizes their combined strengths in meaningful collective occupations to achieve the purpose of sustaining the program itself. The program's name, Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition, reflects the group's action and the community they will be creating. It is with the hope that this community will become an ongoing source of support to mitigate the trauma, displacement, social isolation, and occupational injustice experienced by the participants. With even more hope, participants derive a sense of self-efficacy, acceptance, and well-being as they create their new life within the welcoming confines of the City of Chicago.

## CHAPTER FIVE – Program Evaluation Research Plan

### *Program Scenario and Stakeholders*

The proposed project aims to increase perceived well-being and self-efficacy within a community of female refugees who have resettled in a neighborhood on the northwest side of Chicago. The project, designed to expand throughout the city, will utilize a coalition model and ideally run as adjunctive programming for established community-based social service organizations (CBSSO) already providing refugee services. Coalition goals will focus on reducing occupational deprivation and marginalization within the extended duration in which participants are waiting for a legal asylum decision to be made by the federal government to allow for enhanced occupational choices.

During a 12-week program, each participant cohort will receive interventions to increase knowledge and effectiveness in both creative and business aspects of a non-profit organization while incorporating participant choice and personal agency. In fulfillment of fieldwork requirements, occupational therapy students will carry out interventions that include spiritually and culturally inclusive self-care strategies. Volunteer artists and business consultants will provide specific skill training and guidance as participants carry out various roles and activities. Chosen to enable low-cost service delivery, this model may enable reaching marginalized populations

otherwise unlikely to receive occupational therapy. Additionally, this project intends to confirm the role of occupational therapy as a fundamental discipline in improving the well-being of individuals who have experienced displacement, trauma, and occupational injustice.

Female refugees are often subject to the combined impact of community bias based on gender and culture and are slow to initiate community engagement (Vromans, 2018). Female refugees are at increased risk for negative mental health outcomes due to compound trauma's adverse effects, including but not limited to the experience of pre-resettlement physical endangerment, displacement, and post-resettlement marginalization from the larger community (Felsman, 2016). Female refugees may be concerned for their physical and socioemotional safety (Kim et al., 2013) and have a reduced sense of belonging (Bailey, 2012). They may also perceive themselves as having limited abilities to meaningfully participate in activities that require skills they have yet to acquire (Hurly, 2013). This project seeks to bridge the knowledge, skill, and self-efficacy gap while fostering the beneficial "doing, being, belonging" inherent to occupational engagement (Whalley Hammell, 2014.)

Studies consistently show occupational engagement correlates with increased life satisfaction, while deprivation from meaningful occupations has the opposite effect (Wilcock, 1993; Whiteford, 2000, 2005; Whalley Hammell, 2014, 2017). Mayne

et al. (2016) describe the value of occupational engagement as a foundation of fundamental human rights and social justice. Therefore, the Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition intends to utilize occupational engagement to increase participant well-being and self-efficacy through a business initiative that funds itself and provides value to multiple stakeholders. For the reasons discussed above, the most immediate beneficiaries of this project would be recently resettled female refugees recruited via outreach efforts in conjunction with existing community-based social service organizations. Additional stakeholders include active coalition members (occupational therapy students and their sponsoring academic institutions, volunteer artists and sponsoring art studios, and volunteer business experts). Finally, community members who value inclusivity, healing, empathy, and justice will benefit from this project, as it aims to facilitate the welcome acceptance of participants who have much to offer the social, financial, and occupational climate on both a micro and macro level.

### *Vision for the Program Evaluation Research*

The Crafting COmmuniTy coalition aims to increase well-being and self-efficacy in female refugees recently resettled in Chicago. This document will stipulate evaluation efforts of the program's efficacy and validity. This author hopes that outcome data will show that the program effectively improves positive mental health outcomes for participants, as carried out by occupational therapy-based practitioners.

While the establishment of programming aimed at improving the quality of life for female refugees is necessary, the statistical significance of occupational engagement in engendering this state will contribute meaningfully to the profession's knowledge base. C3 was developed with the inspiration and direction offered by the occupational therapy professions Vision 2025, which states:

*"As an inclusive profession, occupational therapy maximizes health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living. Occupational therapy is evidence-based, client-centered, and cost-effective." (OTA, 2017, p.1).*

A diversion from the medical model, this project seeks to contribute to the existing evidence for using occupational therapy in a community-based mental health setting. Considering the available research examined during the development of this project, programming for female refugees with a focus on occupational deprivation and marginalization is either rare or unreported. Often due to a lack of available funding, occupational therapy service provision in this manner may also be limited by a lack of stakeholder awareness of the profession's scope in benefitting this population. Therefore, this doctoral project aims to offer quantitative and qualitative indicators that will confirm the efficacy of a volunteer coalition spearheaded by occupational

therapy students in driving meaningful change as a low-cost solution to meeting the needs of a marginalized, underfunded population.

*Engagement of Stakeholders, Preliminary Exploration, and Confirmatory Process*

The main stakeholders of this program include female refugees, CBSSO, OT students, academic programs, and volunteer creative and business professionals.

Although the larger community, including those who would showcase or purchase C3-made products, may be interested in the program's outcomes, only those directly involved in the practical application of the program are discussed in this section.

Plans for outreach to more peripheral stakeholders will be addressed by the coalition in cooperation with the participants as they develop and refine communication and product marketing plans during program implementation.

Stakeholders who will be actively involved in the program's realization through the investment of time, energy, or resources will likely be most interested in data validating the effort they put forth. It will be crucial to engage each group as valuable coalition members who will likely benefit from participation without expecting a direct financial gain. Therefore, incorporating processes that will allow for contributing ideas and feedback will aid in gaining continued stakeholder investment and provide a robust collaboration that enhances outcomes for all coalition members.

Initial engagements of community-based social service organizations may take the form of an initial phone call or visit with a director who is in the position to respond to a survey on the demographics and perceived psychosocial needs of the target client population. This will help the coalition develop an outreach plan extending to the most marginalized clients and establish a collaborative relationship tailored to each social service organization. Processes and materials aimed at recruiting organizations through dissemination efforts include an informative video and fact sheet, which are discussed in detail in chapter 6. Participating organizations will be able to provide feedback after each 12-week cohort to ensure the program is satisfactorily meeting clients' needs in a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and empathetic manner. This will take the form of surveys and focus groups on gaining qualitative and quantitative data that will inform goals and processes.

The engagement of occupational therapy academic programs will be initially carried out through informal means by this author. Drawing on established relationships with trusted colleagues, this author will present the study as a pilot program that will enhance existing OT fieldwork programs in a nontraditional psychosocial-based setting. There is value in understanding the current status and shortcomings of nontraditional fieldwork settings. Therefore, a meeting may be organized with local FW coordinators to gain a wide range of feedback on the

potential of this program to create unique psychosocial-based FW opportunities while promoting the benefit of OT for displaced persons. The ideal setting for this meeting may be the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association (ILOTA) conference, where the program presentation may occur during a round table discussion session. Discussion would ideally include a description of research findings, current efforts to enhance OT services of this nature, potential difficulties in program rollout, methods for evaluating student performance, and options for program evaluation in terms of ACOTE and academic institution standards. Maintaining frequent communication with FW coordinators during the first year of program implementation will be crucial in gaining feedback that will influence future program logistics and features.

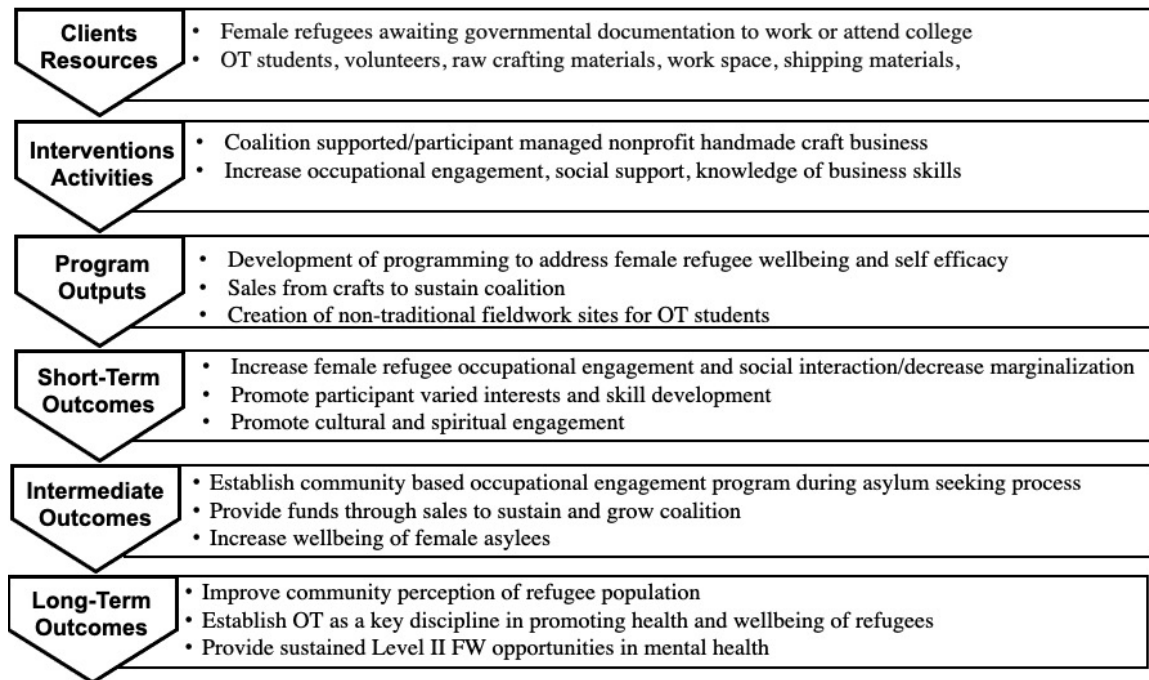
Finally, the engagement of other coalition members (volunteer business consultants and artists) will be beneficial in the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities within a multi-faceted program that services a vulnerable population. Although an assumption can be made that these coalition members will choose to be involved based on an empathic position toward participants, the program mission and vision must be communicated to ensure that service delivery is consistent across disciplines. As services for migrants in the United States are currently undergoing fierce political debate, there is potential for this to influence service delivery and program outcomes. Therefore, the program must ensure all coalition members value

inclusion, empathy, and human rights as the foundational constructs that guide interaction with participants.

*Simplified Logic Model for Use with Stakeholders*

The simplified logic model depicted in figure 5.1 illustrates the expected program inputs and outputs, as well as short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.

**Figure 5.1**



*Program Evaluation Research Questions by Stakeholder Group*

Table 5.1 depicts questions that coalition members may be asked to aid outcome evaluation and enhance future programming.

**Table 5.1**

Stakeholder	Types of Program Evaluation Research Questions
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the content pertinent to your current needs at this stage in resettlement?</li> <li>• Was the content presented in a way that accommodated your interests and learning styles?</li> <li>• Were services and activities provided in a way that may you feel safe, included, and respected?</li> <li>• To what extent do you agree that the program contributed to your general well-being?</li> <li>• To what extent do you agree that confidence in your ability to set and initiate your goals or be an influential member of your new community was improved by participating in this program?</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What aspects of the program best addressed participant well-being and self-efficacy?</li> <li>• In what ways did the program prepare students to advocate for the well-being of refugees or other displaced populations?</li> <li>• What barriers were present that limited the delivery of the content or program implementation?</li> <li>• To what extent do you agree this is a valuable and beneficial fieldwork setting?</li> </ul>
CBSSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe the changes observed in your clients since the program's conclusion?</li> <li>• How has your understanding of the role of OT with this population changed?</li> <li>• Are the long-term goals of the project realistic and achievable?</li> <li>• What aspects of the program could be modified or expanded upon to meet your client's needs better?</li> </ul>
Coalition members (artists, business consultants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was your role in the delivery of the program clear and unhindered?</li> <li>• To what extent do you agree that a coalition model can meet program goals?</li> <li>• Do you feel any additional professional could be a valuable part of the coalition?</li> <li>• Do you feel your time and expertise were effectively and efficiently used? How can this be improved upon?</li> </ul>

*Research Design*

This program's targeted outcomes include increased self-efficacy and perceived well-being in participants. As these are both psychosocial constructs, subjective, measuring their change will involve gaining participant feedback versus observing behavior change. However, thorough, and meaningful measurements of these variables will require collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Therefore, the evaluation of this program will take both a formative and summative approach.

The conduction of focus groups with participants after the 12-week program may provide descriptive data regarding the program's validity. Data from interviews and discussions may reveal themes in the participant's perceptions of the program and its relationship to their current sense of self-efficacy and well-being. On the one hand, this author would be interested in how participants could employ learned skills in light of any challenges or adversity experienced while engaged in the program, information that may best be gained through a qualitative process. On the other hand, quantitative data collected through participant-completed questionnaires pre- and post-intervention may provide insight into a statistically significant change in self-efficacy and well-being and potentially their relationship to one another.

### *Methods*

The program will begin with a cohort of 5–7 participants informed of the program's goals and processes at a meet-and-greet information session. The intention will be for all participants to receive the same program content; however, a control group may be established if there is sufficient interest. Control group completion of quantitative questionnaires along with the group receiving the intervention may aid in demonstrating the efficacy of the program in elevating perceived self-efficacy and well-being. The control group will then ideally take part in the next participant cohort. Data collection will be completed over multiple cohorts, each group providing qualitative and quantitative feedback to help shape a sustaining intervention model in this practice area. Confidentiality will be ensured by providing participants with a unique code that incorporates their initials and cohort number.

### *Qualitative Methods*

Qualitative data will be critical to measuring the outcomes of this program as it will speak to the experience of each unique participant and provide context to any quantitative data that is gathered. The unencumbered participant feedback within a safe setting will be crucial to shaping and expanding future program offerings and ensuring interventions achieve program goals. The ability to provide feedback and communicate opinions to coalition members and data collectors in a language the

participant is most comfortable with will ensure participants feel optimally heard and understood. Therefore, interviewers fluent in the participant's language or interpreters will be utilized to collect qualitative data. This form of data collection would optimally take place in small group settings where a more intimate atmosphere is fostered, allowing participants to feel safe to freely express their opinions on the program and discuss how the program impacted their lives. In situations where participants feel comfortable and provide consent, semi-structured interviews will be recorded for data collectors' review. Questionnaires with open-ended questions may also help to gain pertinent feedback from participants who feel less comfortable speaking within the group.

### *Qualitative Data Management and Analysis*

To ensure the integrity of the qualitative data, this author will enlist the assistance of one to two other coalition members who will review the written responses or the recorded material. Raw responses will be transferred from the source to a shared document program such as Google docs, enabling multiple researchers to review the data. Data gained from recordings will be transcribed into the document program by at least two reviewers to ensure accuracy. Once placed into the program, these documents will be protected so that alterations cannot be made inadvertently. Change reviewers will then look for themes related to the hypothesis and variables of

the program. A software program such as NVivo will be used to assist in the identification of themes that may emerge from participant responses.

### *Summative Or Outcome Research Variables and Measurement*

Two dependent variables will be studied during this program: self-efficacy and well-being. Both will be examined through summative data collection and analysis. As these constructs can only be measured using an individual's subjective report, a means of accurately capturing nuances in a subjective report will be necessary. As previously described, semi-structured interviews will be utilized to collect qualitative data. They will be valuable in establishing the statistical significance of the impact of the intervention in altering levels of perceived self-efficacy and well-being.

Two measurement tools will be utilized to gather: The General Well-Being Schedule (GWB) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). The GWB is an eighteen-item questionnaire asking respondents to scale the intensity and frequency of positive and negative subjective experiences in six areas (well-being, self-control, vitality, depression, anxiety, and general health) over a prior month (National Center for Health Statistics, 1973). The GSE is a similarly designed questionnaire that aims to measure the ability to adapt and cope with stressful life events and adversity (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995).

### *Outcome Data Management and Analysis*

The GWB and GSE are readily available online in PDF form, self-administered, and found to be reliable and valid tools for measuring psychosocial constructs (Chen et al., 2001; Fazio, 1977). These tools may be administered both pre- and post-intervention via computer or paper, and participants may choose either method of completion. This author will enlist the aid of a data analysis specialist to ensure mathematical accuracy and accurate result interpretation. Confidentiality will be ensured by providing a unique code incorporating participant initials and cohort numbers. Raw data will then be transferred to a software program (i.e., Qualtrics) for analysis of intervention efficacy.

### *Anticipated Strengths and Limitations*

Ideally, both qualitative and quantitative measurement tools will be translated into a comfortable language for each participant. There are possibilities of translation errors or the decreased ability for complex concepts to be accurately represented from one language to another. Mindful attempts to control for this variance will be taken by enlisting the assistance of persons fluent in both languages. Additionally, cultural differentiations may cause response variations and confound data results. Language and cultural factors may be difficult to control with quantitative measurements; however, qualitative data may aid in corroborating and substantiating overall results.

Therefore, including both formative and summative measurement and data analysis may provide an optimally robust outcome representation in which intervention efficacy will be considered.

### *Conclusion*

In summary, outcome measures for this doctoral project will focus on ensuring the program successfully alters participants' self-efficacy and well-being levels. Presenting statistically significant quantitative and meaningful qualitative data for these constructs is imperative for the continued participation of all stakeholders and the ability to gain the involvement of additional coalition members. Furthermore, ensuring the program's validity will provide a quality control measure in participants' interest and add to the evidence base regarding psychosocial service provision for female refugees. Finally, concrete outcome data will promote the establishment of occupational therapy as a valuable discipline for the population and bolster what little literature currently exists. The dissemination plan for this project will reflect qualitative and quantitative outcomes data, which may be used as a persuasive tool to encourage the continued growth of the crafting community.

## CHAPTER SIX – Dissemination Plan

### *Introduction*

The Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition (C3 or “the coalition”) aims to increase the subjective perception of self-efficacy and well-being in female refugees post-resettlement. The coalition seeks to enrich existing refugee social services and establish occupational therapy as a critical discipline in optimal refugee resettlement. The coalition’s 12-week program aims to reduce marginalization and create a path to occupational engagement to foster enhanced participant psychosocial functioning. Designed as a self-funded business venture, C3 will guide participants in learning the various operations of a nonprofit business while supporting social, cultural, and spiritual expression. Through the construction and sales of creative handmade products, participants will be involved in the entire process from start to finish with the guidance of volunteer artists and business consultants, occupational therapy students, and sponsoring community based social service organizations (CBSSO).

There are two possible dissemination routes for C3. The goal of the first route will be to secure partnerships with CBSSO and occupational therapy academic programs, which will be critical to securing physical locations for program implementation and the availability of clinical professionals who will deliver the intervention described in this doctoral project. This dissemination plan primarily

focuses on this first route as efforts will establish the foundation from which the remainder of C3 will become possible. This plan outlines the rationale and methods that C3 will utilize in distributing media and materials to increase audience awareness of the program and its potential benefit to all stakeholders. Accordingly, the plan outlines the research and planning encompassed by this project, hoping that an even greater client population can achieve positive outcomes.

The second dissemination route will involve participants' efforts as they develop commerce-based and growth-focused marketing and financial plans in conjunction with coalition members. Although route two will be crucial to the sustained success of the coalition, this section will not discuss its specific detail as it will be developed and shaped by participant cohorts within the temporal context of program implementation. Chapter four of this doctoral paper offers more specific programming details.

The following goals outline the coalition's primary purposes and indicate this dissemination plan's essential objectives.

- Long-Term Goal: Outcome measures will indicate statistically significant increases in female refugees' subjective perceptions of self-efficacy and well-being.
- Short-Term Goal 1: The Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition will enhance

occupational engagement in female refugees recently resettled in Chicago.

- Short-Term Goal 2: The Crafting COMMuniTy Coalition will establish OT as a critical discipline in providing psychosocial-based services to refugees.
- Short-Term Goal 3: The Crafting COMMuniTy Coalition will be a self-funded nonprofit business, generating funds for continued program enhancement and broader service delivery.

### *Primary Audience*

Community based social service organizations (CBSSOs) currently providing resettlement support will be the primary audience for this initiative. Embedded in Chicago neighborhoods with high refugee populations, these organizations will be critical partners in gaining access to and trust of potential participants and a safe physical meeting space. Sharing the coalition's objectives, processes, and outcome data will be crucial in recruiting more CBSSOs within the Chicago area. By increasing partnerships with CBSSO, the coalition will be able to reach an even more significant number of women refugees who may otherwise remain marginalized and deprived of occupational engagement.

Key Messages for the Primary Audience:

- This program will promote participation in a creative venture involving your

clients in every aspect of nonprofit business operations.

- This program will not be costly to your organization other than using a weekly safe and comfortable meeting space.
- Participation in this program may enhance opportunities for your clients to build social networks and employment connections.

### Influential Spokespersons for the Primary Audience

Participants who have completed all twelve weeks of the program, have opted to remain involved and are willing to speak on behalf of the coalition are likely to be the most influential in acquiring other social service agencies. Although coalition members will be able to provide outcome measures data, only the participants can speak meaningfully about how the program impacted them. The shared personal perspectives of participants are likely to be instrumental in earning the trust and esteem of both the primary and the secondary audience.

### *Secondary Audience*

A secondary but essential audience for this dissemination plan will be occupational therapy academic programs, as students will provide occupational therapy services. Students will play a vital role in the coalition through group planning and facilitation, modification of activities to accommodate varied abilities

and learning styles, and collaboration with individual participants on goal development. Student engagement will also be critical to the program's funding plan while concurrently enhancing nontraditional fieldwork opportunities. Healthy partnerships with program directors and fieldwork coordinators will afford C3 a very low to no-cost workforce, allowing more sales income to fund the ongoing procurement of art and craft materials. Furthermore, greater student participation will enable the coalition to provide occupational therapy services among a broad scope of CBSSO. The dissemination plan, therefore, includes efforts to gain student interest and enthusiasm for a fieldwork opportunity with a psychosocial and social justice framework.

#### Key Messages for Secondary Audience

- This program is a nontraditional, Level II psychosocial fieldwork opportunity that will enhance your offerings under the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards.
- This fieldwork setting will allow students to gain skills in occupational profile assessment, empathetic client interaction, case management, and advocacy.

#### Influential Spokesperson for the Secondary Audience

Josephine Burriss, MOT, OTR/L, is an expert in developing nontraditional

psychosocial fieldwork settings. She is currently professionally affiliated with multiple Occupational Therapy and Occupational Therapy Assistant programs in the Chicago area. Josephine would be an esteemed advocate for the coalition as she is highly familiar with ACOTE standards for fieldwork settings and has much experience recruiting and transforming community-based social service programs into fieldwork settings that allow clients and students to flourish. Having been a member of this project's circle of advisors, Josephine would be able to communicate the goals and outcomes of the coalition and its value as a fieldwork partner for academic institutions.

#### *Dissemination Activities*

This author has created a short video outlining the coalition's purpose and goals. The video is comprehensive enough to reach a broad audience; however, it can be modified to fit the information needs of both primary and secondary audiences. In its address to the primary audience, the video will contain central messages regarding the coalition's benefit for participants, including potential skills gained and opportunities garnered. After the program's inaugural cohort, versions of the video will contain the testimony of participants as they share qualitative experiences in their own words. CBSSO program directors will receive the video via email and a fact

sheet highlighting pertinent information. Although this email will contain methods a CBSSO may use to contact the coalition, this author will follow up with each organization by phone or in person. A brief staff in-service will be offered free of charge to the CBSSO, which will share some specifics of this author's research that may be helpful regardless of the CBSSOs intent to pursue a further partnership with the coalition. Program participants may choose to attend the in-service to share their experience with the coalition if they are comfortable doing so.

An additional video created by this author outlines occupational therapy's value as a discipline attentive to social justice, which merges well with the video discussed above. Specifically tailored to the student experience, the video's message pertains to occupational therapy (OT) and occupational therapy assistant (OTA) students as agents of social change. This message is crucial in that students who choose the coalition as a fieldwork opportunity will also be selected by the coalition based on their interest in occupational justice and desire to work within the psychosocial realm of OT. In addition to the video, this author will offer academic programs a brief in-class speaking engagement to share coalition benefits and answer the questions of students who may be interested in participation. Based on their comfort level, program participants may want to speak to students and provide testimonials based on their experiences with the coalition.

*Dissemination Budget*

The dissemination plan for this project is expected to be low-cost. The video creation program is offered through a free platform and will not incur an additional cost outside of the cost of time and effort. Furthermore, the cost of provision of any in-service or speaking engagements will be low as they will include the time of this author and other volunteers. Although transportation costs are expected for travel to CBSSO and academic programs, it is likely to be at most \$500 total for a year. A mutually agreed upon virtual meeting platform is optimal, as it would negate transportation costs. This number is reflected in this project's funding plan and exemplifies its low cost, which is a relevant aspect of its overarching design. Maintaining a low overhead cost will enable sales proceeds to enhance programming directly in participants' interest.

*Evaluation of Dissemination Plan*

The success of the dissemination plan will be determined by the number of CBSSOs, and academic program partners the coalition can gain. While it may initially seem beneficial to bring on new partners rapidly, it will be in the coalition's best interest to grow slowly and organically, gaining partnerships commensurate with C3's business success. Scaling in this manner will be necessary to ensure the availability of resources, including workforce, materials, and, most importantly, access to potential

participants. Therefore, the coalition will seek to partner with no more than two CBSSO and four academic programs in its first year, with expansion plans reviewed and recorded each year through the coalition's strategic plan considering the projected availability of human resources and non-human capital.

### *Conclusion*

The goal of C3 and this dissemination plan is to steadily expand the availability of the coalition to participants and other stakeholders alike. Mindful of the fundamental need to keep overhead costs to a minimum, the dissemination plan includes efforts to highlight this as an influential factor in gaining partnerships with organizations that otherwise would be unable to access occupational therapy services. Furthermore, this plan draws on the benefits participation will offer student service providers, who will fulfill fieldwork requirements in exchange for their dedication to the purpose of C3.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN – Funding Plan**

### *Introduction*

The Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition (C3) aims to offer female refugees the opportunity to engage in a collaborative endeavor to increase their knowledge and skills in all business operations. The purpose of C3 is to promote well-being and self-efficacy for women displaced and resettled in new communities within Chicago, where they are subject to occupational deprivation and marginalization. Structured as a business venture, C3 will focus on facilitating optimal social participation, cultural and spiritual expression, inclusivity, and empowerment. The coalition will serve as a bridge to occupational engagement for participants awaiting the asylum decision and governmental documentation that will allow them to become legally employed or attend school in an official capacity.

### *Operating Costs and Potential Resources*

As a self-funded program, C3 participants will act in administrative and worker roles. Participants will directly perform tasks to manage all aspects of business operations to transform the proceeds from sales into the expansion of the coalition itself. After receipt of an initial investment to procure raw materials, income from participant-crafted products will sustain the coalition, thereby funding future supply

needs and eliminating worker payroll costs. The coalition will be organized as a nonprofit business, allowing the coalition tax-exempt status on revenue and the purchase of materials and other capital. The costs associated with developing a nonprofit corporation are minimal, and angel investors, such as a small group of licensed occupational therapy practitioners or through corporate donations, may cover year one start-up costs. Sales proceeds will cover subsequent yearly costs associated with maintaining business registration.

C3 will utilize occupational therapy students on Level II fieldwork as group and activity facilitators to circumvent the need for paid occupational therapy practitioners. This framework will lower operating costs significantly while creating a nontraditional fieldwork site that fulfills the psychosocial portion of the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) fieldwork requirements. OT students will facilitate group processes and procedures, modify tasks for participants with varying abilities, and guide each participant in setting her own participation goals. Therefore, ongoing partnerships with local academic programs and fieldwork coordinators will be crucial to the success of C3. As an active member of the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association and former Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program faculty, this author has professional relationships with program directors and fieldwork coordinators from multiple Chicago area OT and OTA programs. These

relationships have led to collaboration on many projects, with C3 being of interest due to its potential as a nontraditional fieldwork site that meets ACOTE standards and furthers the interest of the occupational therapy profession as crucial mental health care providers.

In addition to adding to the robustness of nontraditional Level II fieldwork options, involving OT students may benefit C3 through financial support provided by Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) fundraisers. An initial cash donation of \$1000 would enable C3 to obtain raw materials such as jewelry, candle and soap-making supplies, pottery materials, textiles, paints, and canvases. Academic institution SOTA officers and faculty advisors may organize school-wide donation drives to obtain varied materials and supplies. As an additional fundraiser, and through collaboration with the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association, plans for a community event to increase C3 participant social interaction and raise programming funds may be held at a historic Chicago location, Jane Adams Hull House (ILOTA). Opened in the 1890s to provide social services to Chicago's vast immigrant population, Hull House is now a museum and has been made available to ILOTA for previous events.

As a volunteer venture, coalition members' time will be donated to the program, eliminating the need for payroll expenses. To avoid the burden on a small

group of volunteers, C3 intends to build a sustainable network of business consultants, artists, and community-based social service organizations. Therefore, financial resources will likely be required to maintain in-person or virtual connections with coalition members. These costs may be factored into the technology portion of the budget and encompass expenses needed to sustain the coalition website. An internet presence will serve as both an avenue for sales and to inform the public of the coalition's efforts. Finally, technology costs reflect the need for bookkeeping software and a computer to manage financial planning, inventory, and scheduling. The Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) is a nonprofit organization identified as a potential partner for C3. The WBDC will be crucial in developing and guiding participant skills by offering a wide range of free courses and volunteer consultants.

Community social service organizations, after-hours college/university OT classrooms, or art studios may offer physical locations needed for product creation. Lilstreet Art Center in Chicago, Illinois, is one identified organization that may be an ideal partner for C3, as its mission involves uniting communities by creating a safe and inclusive space for a diverse range of artists (Lilstreet Art Center, 2022). Lilstreet offers sizeable open studio spaces and could donate art rooms bi-weekly for large projects or those that require more complex tools such as pottery wheels, screen

printing, or woodworking equipment. Occupational therapy academic programs may also donate after-hours classroom space, which would be at no cost to the program and may allow student volunteers to participate in helping to facilitate labor such as set up and clean up.

### *Conclusion*

The intended purpose of C3 is to engender self-efficacy and well-being in female refugees through an occupation-based coalition model. The coalition, comprised of OT students, business consultants, artists, and community-based social service organizations, will promote female refugees in building skills to enable optimal social and occupational participation. C3 will be self-funded after initial contributions are received through SOTA and ILOTA fundraisers to cover start-up costs. Furthermore, utilizing OT students and volunteers will eliminate labor costs, and donated studio space will eliminate location overhead. This collaborative endeavor will be ongoing and beneficial to all stakeholders. Table 7.1 contains the budgetary needs for the first two years of the coalition's operation.

Table 7.1

<b>Inaugural Year Budget</b>		
Item	Cost	Details
Labor	\$0	Participants to create products, time donated by business consultants, artists, and groups facilitated by Level II FW OT students
Physical space	\$0	Space donated by community-based soc service org, OT academic programs, art studio
Product materials	\$1000	Funded through SOTA fundraisers
Technology	\$1000	Includes website development and maintenance, bookkeeping software; funded through SOTA fundraisers
Marketing	\$500	Materials to promote C3 (business cards, flyers, magnets) funded through SOTA fundraisers
501c3 corporation costs	\$52 filing fee	Funded through SOTA fundraisers
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2552.00</b>	
<b>Year Two Budget</b>		
Item	Cost	Details
Labor	\$0	Participants to create products, time donated by business consultants, artists, and groups facilitated by Level II FW OT students
Physical space	\$0	Space donated by CBSSO, OT academic program, art studio
Product materials	\$3000	Funded by the previous year's sale, SOTA fundraisers
Technology	\$1000	Funded by the previous year's sale, SOTA fundraisers
Marketing	\$500	Funded by the previous year's sale, SOTA fundraisers
Corporation costs	\$10	The previous year's sales will fund the annual corporation filing fee.
<b>Total</b>	<b>4510.00</b>	

## **CHAPTER EIGHT – Conclusion**

Since the study for this doctoral project began, much has occurred in the global community in which we live. For decades we in the United States have observed the horrors of war unfold in Middle Eastern and African countries, among others. In 2022, the world is watching as war, and civil unrest grows in Ukraine and Venezuela. As of mid-2022, estimations of forcibly displaced people surged to 103 million, representing nearly one in every seventy-eight people on earth who have fled their homes in search of safe refuge (United Nations High Commission on Refugees, 2022).

The process of seeking safety as a refugee or asylum seeker is rife with struggle and uncertainty. Legal processes may take months to years and are occasionally unnecessarily delayed by host countries' governments attempting to resolve internal political differences related to the issue of migration (Hocking, 2018). Additionally, disinformation that begets distrust and disdain may lead to hostility toward migrants in resettlement communities (Hassan, 2016). The circumstances for human beings most in need of a hospitable and comforting welcome can be nothing short of hostile, further compounding the trauma they have carried before being displaced from their own lives (Schweitzer, 2006). Individuals and families must now begin to adapt and accommodate to a new environment, culture, and language while often rebuilding an identity from the embers. At this juncture, refugees are at a significantly higher risk

than the general population for psychological distress due to adversity during migration trajectories and post-migration factors that lead to ambiguity and insecurity about the future (Kirmeyer, 2011)

A Code of Ethics binds Occupational Therapy Practitioners (OTPs) to provide services grounded in altruism, equality, freedom, justice, dignity, truth, and prudence (AOTA, 2020). The American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Vision 2025 calls on OTPs to "maximize health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living" (AOTA, 2017, p.1). Furthermore, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) delineates the role of OTPs being one that is "*obligated to promote occupational rights as the actualization of human rights*" (WFOT, 2019, p.1). *When occupations that provide human lives meaning, structure, and a sense of well-being are most threatened, OTPs have a duty to advocate for occupational, and therefore social, justice.* These core tenants inspired the Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition (C3), which seeks to increase the well-being and self-efficacy of female refugees during a time when lack of purpose and belonging puts them at high risk for adverse mental health outcomes.

C3 seeks to promote social support, spiritual and cultural expression, and opportunities to build skills that will be useful to the future endeavors of female

refugees. Designed as a collective occupation that aims to drive participant sense of purpose and belonging, C3 unites participants with coalition members around a common goal. The cohort-based, 12-week program offered by C3 will involve Level II fieldwork occupational therapy student practitioners, volunteer business consultants and artists, and community-based social service organizations in creating and selling handmade crafted items. As a self-sustained business venture, both financial and human resources will funnel back into the coalition as proceeds will allow for program growth, and cohort graduates will have the opportunity to remain involved as mentors to future participants.

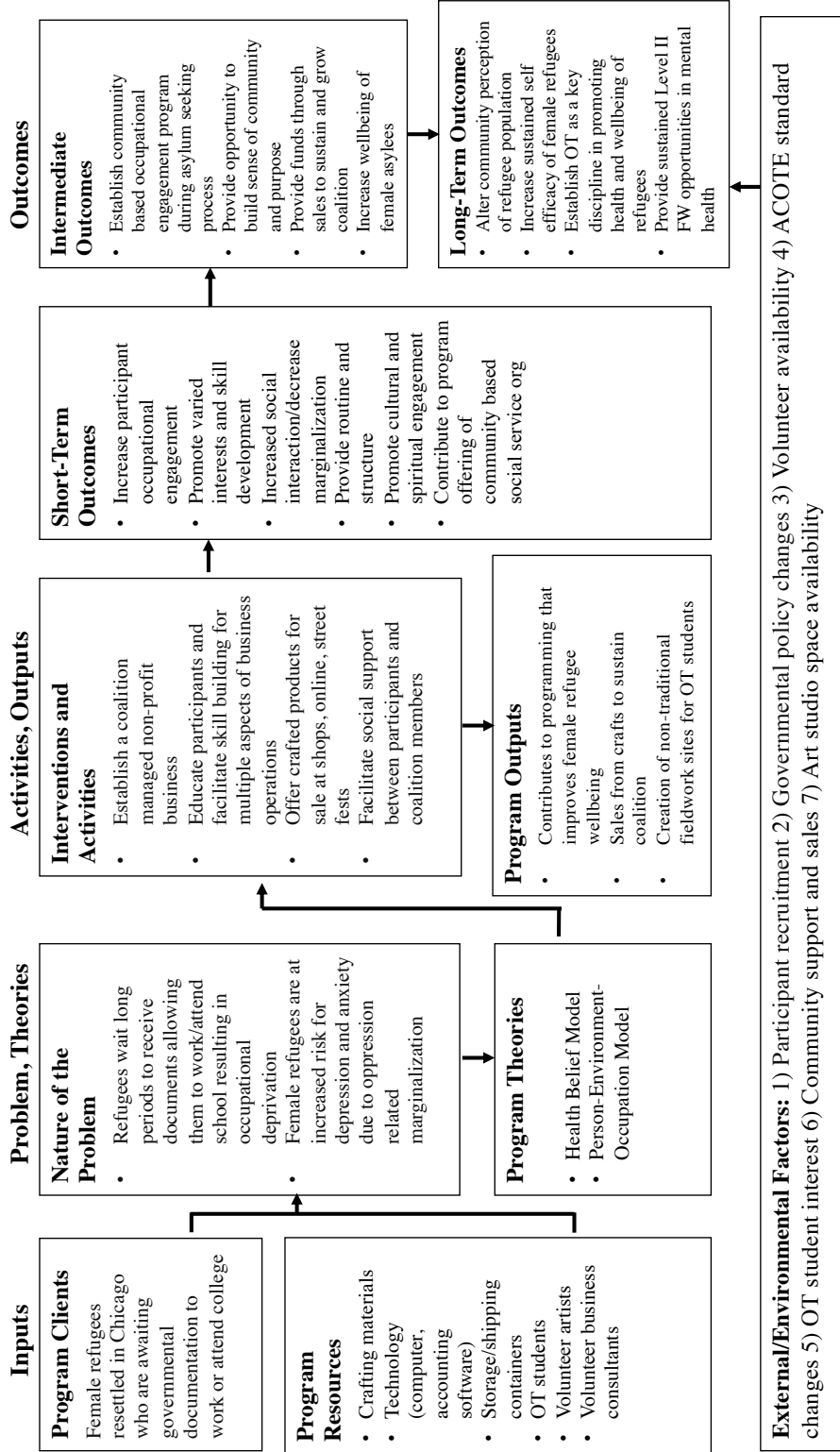
The utilization of occupational therapy students will provide a dual benefit. The first is that practitioner labor costs will remain low to enable services to reach a marginalized population. The second is that a non-traditional, psychosocial fieldwork setting such as C3 will prepare students to recognize the impact of occupational injustice and advocate for the inherent rights of all people to live a life inclusive of purpose and belonging. This doctoral project, therefore, included a description of the dissemination efforts planned to gain partnerships with occupational therapy academic programs. From Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) fundraisers to direct client interaction, all occupational therapy students may benefit from learning advocacy strategies that will guide their future practice in accordance

with AOTA and WFOT.












Finally, while researching this doctoral project, it became clear to this author that there is a paucity of published evidence-based literature that establishes occupational therapy as a valuable discipline in refugee service provision. Considering the disruption of life roles, routines, rituals, and habits caused by displacement, as well as the negative impact on psychosocial performance skills, occupational therapy is an ideal discipline to evaluate the needs of the refugee population. Facilitation of the rebuilding of identity structuring occupations is within the direct scope of occupational therapy practice. With global circumstances stakes for humanity higher than ever, the time is now for occupational practitioners to claim the rightful position as advocates for the occupational well-being of refugees.

APPENDIX A – Logic Model









Program title: *Crafting COmmunity Coalition: Promoting Female Refugee Well-being and Self efficacy Through Occupational Engagement*



## APPENDIX B1 – Interest Checklist/Creative

Creative Activities	Already doing	Interested	Not Interested	
Painting				
Knitting				
Pottery				
Sewing				
Crochet				
Mosaics				
Jewelry				
Drawing				
Soap making				
Woodworking				
Embroidery				

**APPENDIX B2 – Interest Checklist/Business**

Business Activities		Already doing	Interested	Not Interested
Accounting/ bookkeeping				
Sales				
Marketing/ advertising				
Management				
Website development				
Communications				
Social Media				
Strategic planning				

## APPENDIX C –C3 12-Week Program Sample

WK	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	FACILITATOR
1	Group Intro	Participants will be welcomed and introduced, S will explain C3 purpose and goals and interest checklist administered	S
2	Intro to Creative Arts	Participants will be introduced to various media and projects available to the group for product creation through demonstrations and hands on experience	A, S
3	Open creative and wellbeing studio (Mindfulness)	S will lead an exercise to educate participants on mindfulness strategies to be used during open studio work. Participants will be free to create a project of their choosing as facilitated by volunteer artist/artisan; S will provide modifications as needed, guide project choices.	A, S
4	Intro to Website Design	BC will provide a presentation on website development and management. Participants will then collaborate through idea sharing on plans for C3 website development.	BC, S
5	Open creative and wellbeing studio (Meditation)	S will lead an exercise to educate participants on a meditation for stress reduction. Participants will be free to create a project of their choosing as facilitated by volunteer artist/artisan; S will provide modifications as needed, guide project choices.	A, S
6	Intro to Bookkeeping	BC will provide a presentation on basics of bookkeeping and accounting. Participants will collaborate on creation of C3 financial goals and plans to fund future projects. S will facilitate idea sharing and planning process.	BC, S
7	Open creative and wellbeing studio (Gratitude)	S will lead creation of a gratitude list. Participants will be free to create a project of their choosing as facilitated by volunteer artist/artisan; S will provide modifications as needed, guide project choices.	A, S
8	Intro to Marketing	BC will provide a presentation on marketing and advertising. Participants will collaborate on marketing plan ideas with discussion led by S	BC, S
9	Open creative and wellbeing studio (Journaling)	S will lead an exercise to educate participants on journaling for stress reduction. Participants will be free to create a project of their choosing as facilitated by volunteer artist/artisan; S will provide modifications as needed, guide project choices.	A, S
10	Intro to Sales/C3 sales plan	BC will provide a presentation sales strategy. Participants will role-play sales transactions and money exchange with S	BC, S
11	Open creative and wellbeing studio (Yoga)	S will lead a short yoga session. Participants will be free to create a project of their choosing as facilitated by volunteer artist/artisan; S will provide modifications as needed, guide project choices.	A, S
12	Group wrap up and future planning	S will collaborate with participants to develop a plan for continued participation with C3, choice of committee (creative, web and social media, financials, etc) and plans for participant scaffolding of future groups members.	S

**Key: S- Student, A – Artist/artisan, BC- Business consultant**

## **Executive Summary**

### *Introduction*

We take our physical and emotional safety for granted in the United States. We assume it will be respected and demand justice if it is not. We also enjoy the ability to structure our lives without considering how the distress of war will directly impact our immediate surroundings and very existence. Torture and suffering at the hands of our government are not fathomable to us. However, these concerns are a daily reality for human beings worldwide, some of whom are subject to war, political unrest, and human rights violations that force actions to ensure survival. In some cases, only the strongest will survive to make it across land and sea, with those caught in transit taken back to their abusers with heightened risk to safety (Kim et al., 2013). In 2021, over 27 million people sought refuge in other countries after being forcibly displaced from their homes (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2021).

Those who make it to a welcoming country do so at the expense of almost everything they own and sometimes the loss of everyone they have ever known. Their lives are now disrupted, their identities are shattered, and the fate of their families is left uncertain. Refugees now must attempt to remain calm, patient, and hopeful in a new country whose citizens may treat them with distrust, fear, or disdain (Huot et al., 2016). The wait for governments to grant an asylum decision is often

long. It begets a stressful period of inactivity as proper documentation is needed to get a job or go to school (Hainmueller et al., 2016). Unsurprisingly, the rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder are high (Kirmeyer et al., 2011). Studies show that the circumstances are even worse for women (Vromans, 2018; Rometsch-Ogioun El Sount et al., 2018). Often subjugated in their country of origin, the potential for oppression based on gender, race, and ethnicity exists after resettlement, and a female asylum seeker may become marginalized and alienated (Whiteford, 2005; Felsman, 2016). The Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition (C3) intends to intervene at this juncture.

Grounded in the philosophy that occupational participation is a determinant of health, C3's mission is to increase occupational engagement of refugee and asylum-seeking women, with optimism that it will translate to improved self-efficacy and an enhanced sense of well-being. The concept of occupational justice inspired this project based on the principle that all individuals have the right to choose roles, routines, and activities that engender life meaning, structure, and a sense of personal identity. As a matter of social justice, occupational justice offers practitioners an understanding of how deprivation from what one most reveres can lead to diminished quality of life and long-term adverse mental health outcomes. With this concept in mind, C3 seeks to reduce the marginalization of female refugees by offering them a

pathway to engagement in a collaborative effort that incorporates volition and personal agency.

### *Project Overview*

The three main objectives of the Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition include: (1) to provide female refugees with a pathway to occupational engagement within a group structure that is cognizant and supportive of their psychosocial, cultural, and spiritual well-being, (2) to promote the building of practical, commerce related skills that will translate to a sense of self-efficacy in multiple areas of occupation, and (3) to establish occupational therapy as a critical discipline in the advancement of participation, health, and well-being of the refugee population.

Within a 12-week program, participants will learn aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation of business operations while practicing mindfulness, self-exploration, and meditative practices that will encourage self-care, occupational adaptation, and identity re-formation. Using a coalition service delivery model, C3 seeks to engender collaboration between participants, occupational therapy student practitioners, artists, and business consultants to create handmade crafted products sold in the community and through a participant-built and managed website. The involvement of volunteer professionals and occupational therapy students in collaboration with community social service organizations will ensure comprehensive

and modest cost service delivery. Participants will be involved in all aspects of running the nonprofit business, from procurement of raw crafting materials to recording of sales revenue. Monetary resources will be funneled back into the program, creating a self-funded enterprise. The potential for program expansion will occur through the inaugural participant mentorship of future group members and a dissemination plan to secure partnerships with community-based social service organizations and occupational therapy academic programs. Utilization of volunteer art and business specialists and occupational therapy student practitioners will enable low-cost service provision and ensure a robust and supportive approach to installing skills that will foster participant success during and after the resettlement process.

### *Key Findings*

Studies have shown that social interconnectedness and belonging (Ramungo & Kronenberg, 2015), opportunities to be in service to others (Hancock et al., 2015) ;), and safe expression of cultural and spiritual values (Blignault et al., 2020) have supported positive mental health outcomes in the refugee population. C3 aims to incorporate each aspect within a collaborative program that will foster practical skill development and empower female refugees to adopt a sense of self-efficacy during and after the resettlement process. Self-efficacy has been established as a subjective construct that buffers distress in the refugee population (Morina et al., 2018), enables

occupation adaptation, and positively correlates with increased perceived life satisfaction and well-being (Raanaas et al., 2018).

The Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) was selected to guide service delivery as it incorporates resource sharing and collective efforts toward a common goal (Eggert, 2015). The coalition model also reflects the value of collective occupation, found by studies to improve the sense of competence in an atmosphere where belonging and community are prioritized (Ramungo & Kronenberg, 2015). According to Meng (2018), to successfully empower refugees in making decisions that affirm their well-being, programs must be mindful of beliefs related to culture, religion, spirituality, and the impact of the environment on physical and emotional safety. The program must positively alter each crafter's perception of her self-efficacy and well-being to result in enduring change. Therefore, the Health Belief Model (HBM) was chosen to provide a framework for occupational therapy student practitioners to design group activities and interventions.

### *Recommendations*

The potential for forcibly displaced persons worldwide has increased due to current global sociopolitical events. Now is the time to take the lead in developing programming that contributes to the well-being of those who have experienced the trauma of displacement and bolsters the evidence base that denotes occupational

therapy as a significant discipline in service provision. The American Occupational Therapy Association's Vision 2025 calls upon us to "*maximize(s) health, well-being, and quality of life for all people*" (AOTA, 2016). Occupational therapy practitioners must be advocates for refugees and asylum seekers as promoters of well-being and participation for all human beings. The profession must maintain ardent awareness of national and global events that precipitate occupational injustice, uphold the value of occupation as a health determinant, and advocate for policy that promotes well-being for all.

Despite the enormity of the ramifications of trauma and displacement on being and doing, little research exists showing the benefit of occupational therapy with the refugee population. A great deal of the literature reviewed for this project was outside of the field however speaks to life disruption and suggests intervention in a manner that encapsulates occupational therapy's core philosophy and domain of practice. The establishment of programming for those most at risk for occupational and justice should be a primary goal of occupational therapy, as participation and well-being are distinctly affected. This project intends to contribute to occupational therapy practitioners' understanding of elements essential to promote pathways to well-being through occupational engagement for female refugees.

*Conclusion*

The Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition proposes an opportunity for healing through occupational engagement and support of a goal-oriented network of empathetic professionals and others experiencing similar circumstances. Participants will undoubtedly carry the trauma sustained prior to resettlement and will likely benefit from multi-disciplinary health service provision. C3 aims to reduce the potential for trauma compounded by post-resettlement occupational deprivation and occupational and social marginalization. C3's 12-week program will challenge this occupational injustice by incorporating interventions focused on improving perceived well-being and self-efficacy with the involvement of volunteer professionals and occupational therapy students and in collaboration with community social service organizations.

## FACT SHEET



### Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition: Promoting Female Refugee Well-Being and Self-Efficacy Through Occupational Engagement

Jeanine M. Panico MOTR/L  
OTD Candidate

#### Description of the Problem

- In 2021, over 27 million people sought refuge in other countries after being forcibly displaced from their homes due to political unrest (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2021)
- Delays in government documentation and subsequent unemployment, discrimination, and social isolation negatively impact the well-being of refugees (Hocking, 2018)
- Often subjugated in their country of origin, the potential for oppression based on gender, race, and ethnicity exists after resettlement, female refugees may become marginalized and alienated (Whiteford, 2005).
- Female refugees often have low levels of education and health literacy and have few skills outside of farming and trading, leaving them with a limited pathway to obtain sustained occupational well-being. (Felsman, 2016)

#### Proposed Solution

- The Crafting COmmuniTy Coalition (C3) seeks to offer female refugee clients a pathway to occupational justice based on the occupational therapy philosophy that doing, being, becoming, and belonging contributes to perceived quality of life (Whalley Hammell, 2014).
- Through participation in a collaborative nonprofit business venture, participants will create and sell hand-crafted products with the support of a coalition comprised of occupational therapy students, volunteer business consultants, and volunteer artists.
- Through contribution to the social and economic interests of the coalition itself, and social interaction that fosters a sense of shared purpose, the program seeks to fulfill the following objectives:



- Increase participant levels of life satisfaction and wellbeing
- Increase participant's sense of self-efficacy in connecting with the larger community to increase occupational opportunities
- Decrease participant levels of depression and anxiety

### Contributing Theories

- The Health Belief Model (HBM) provides a foundational understanding of the intrapersonal factors that impact the well-being of refugees, inclusive of personal beliefs related to culture, religion, spirituality, and the impact of the environment on physical and emotional safety (Meng, 2018).



- The Community Coalition Action Theory (CCAT) provides a framework based on effectual coalition building by incorporating the viewpoints and skills of individuals who are experts in their respective areas into a common purpose or goal (Eggert, 2015).

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### Implications for Occupational Therapy Practice

- C3 establishes OT as a key discipline in the provision of psychosocial-based services for refugees.



- C3 is a nontraditional, psychosocial fieldwork opportunity that will enhance offerings in accordance with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards.
  - C3 promotes occupation therapy as a discipline that meets the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for health establishment.

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*“Man, through the use of his hands, as they are energized by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health.”*

*- Reilly, 1962*

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**CURRICULUM VITAE**

