Measuring Impact: A Collaborative Community Project to Measure Peace Building

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the need for program evaluation, occupational therapy students have provided the Peace Learning Center with vital outcome measures that can lead to program remodeling, content recreation, and improved training, resources, and follow-up for facilitators, all within the profession's scope of practice in the community-based realm.

INTRODUCTION

In alignment with the Peace Learning Center's (PLC) purpose and mission, peace is a prerequisite for creating an environment in which all people have the capacity to live safe and productive lives and to engage in meaningful activities and occupations. To address the need for increased peace, nonprofit organizations such as the Peace Learning Center work to promote equity and justice through the implementation of innovative practices. In order for non-profit organizations to effectively promote change in a community, they must be engaged in both direct service and advocacy work; however, creating caring communities and measuring the impacts of peace is a challenge.

Within Indianapolis, the Peace Learning Center strives to be a critical catalyst in creating more peaceful, equitable, and just schools, businesses, and communities. By offering workshops that educate families and community stakeholders, the organization utilizes principles of restorative justice, equity dialogue, and social-emotional learning to provide opportunities for collaborative learning and growth. These trainings take various forms including youth camps and educator workshops and allow individuals to better recognize and overcome challenges that inhibit peaceful communication and livelihood.

An occupational therapy student (OTS) team, composed of five doctoral students at IUPUI, engaged in the emerging practice area of community-based care through a course project in partnership with the Peace Learning Center to create a sustainable peace-measuring tool. One of the goals in supporting this aim was

to conceptualize the definition of peace in a community through a needs assessment, including a brief literature review, which led to the identification of six key themes and six perceptions to measure peacefulness. Following this step, the OTS team generated three surveys for student groups and families to measure peace in their school and the broader community. Periodic implementation of these surveys at school training sites will help to provide data to ensure effective programming and to show evidence of increased peacefulness in the communities served. The importance of a comprehensive peace-measuring tool will allow community organizations, such as the PLC, to better understand their impact and implications for needed change, based on participant feedback. Figure 1 outlines the full Theory of Change Map that guided the OTS team's work.

GUIDING OCCUPATIONAL THEORY (OT) THEORY

Community-based occupational therapy, an emerging practice area, is set within the community context and addresses the most pressing community concerns. Occupational therapy practitioners focus on a variety of factors to facilitate greater overall quality of life by providing increased opportunities for and by removing barriers to meaningful activity engagement. As a newer practice setting, developing replicable methodology and practice approaches to care are critically important to solidifying the profession's role in community settings. The OTS team recognized the unique lens with which they could approach peace-measuring in an evidence-based manner that holistically acknowledges contributing factors.

Within this project, the OTS team utilized the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) framework to guide thought processes throughout this

project. This framework focuses on the person, context, task, and performance (Dunn et al., 1994). Employing this lens to guide the project aided the team in focusing on specific factors when approaching a partnership with the PLC. The EHP framework emphasized the importance of access to opportunities for a meaningful activity to improve overall occupational performance. Peace is a vital factor in consideration of the context surrounding a person and can affect the performance and tasks in which they are able to engage. It is through this lens that the team has approached partnership with the PLC.

METHODOLOGY
Needs Assesment

A needs assessment was conducted to determine the strengths, problems, resources, and barriers that exist for the PLC and the populations that they serve. The OTS team was initially presented with a problem by the PLC's Director of Programs Dountonia Batts via Zoom (D. Batts, personal communication, September 13, 2021). The team then completed an email interview with the stakeholder, utilizing the questions outlined in Appendix A to further determine areas of need.

It was determined that a sustainable and

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effective tool for measuring peace would be created to address the organization's need for impact assessment of their restorative justice
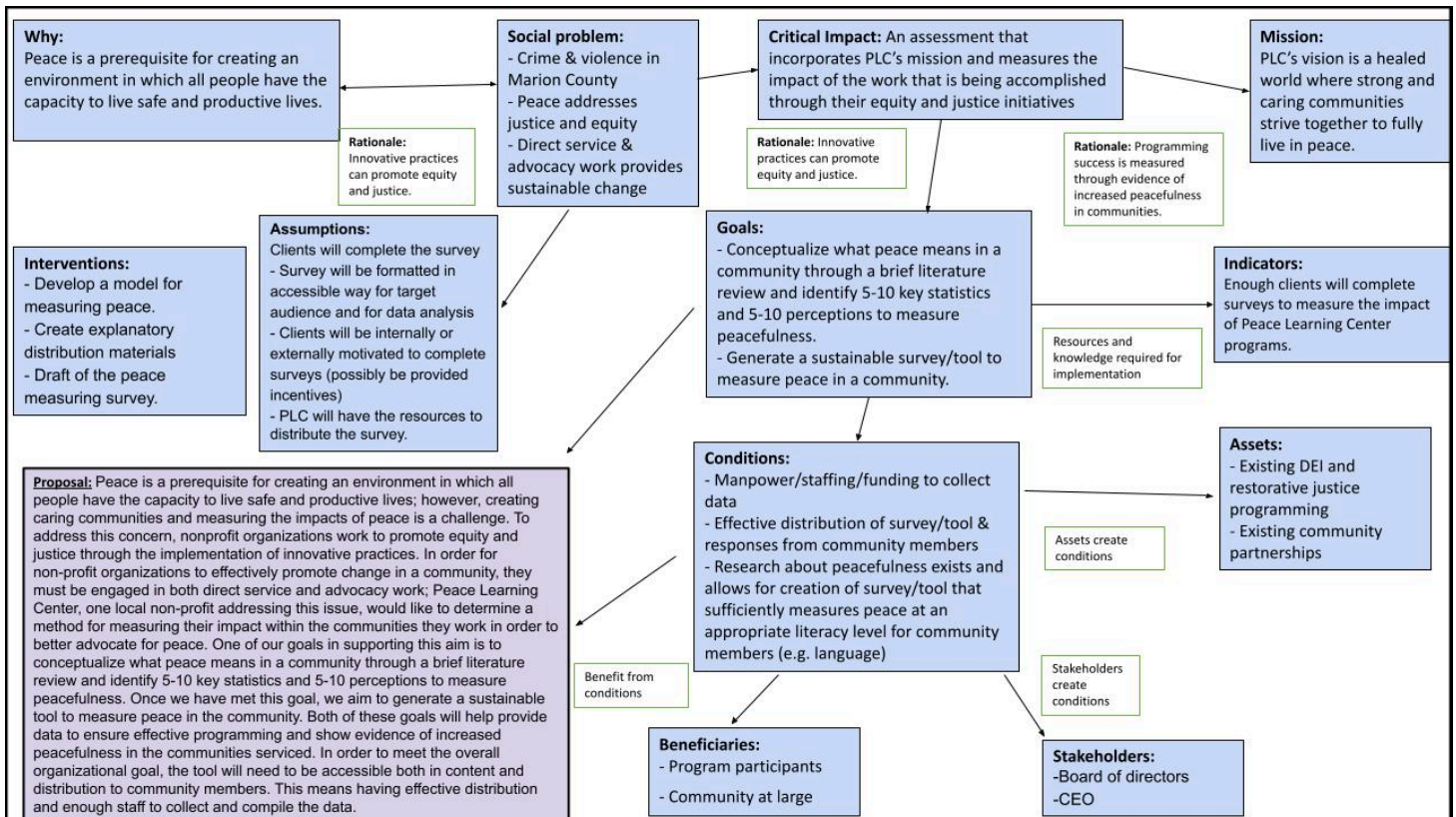
Figure 1. Theory of Change Map utilized to guide the OTS team's work in partnership with the Peace Learning Center.

programming in Indianapolis public schools. The results of the needs assessment interview were utilized to guide the OTS team in a brief literature review to provide a better understanding of how to measure peace within the PLC's targeted communities. These stakeholder conversations identified the need for a peace-measuring tool, and the literature review conceptualized peace, outlined existing peace assessments, and provided key statistical measures of peace.

Literature Review
Peace Conceptualization
A review of the literature was conducted to include a variety of perspectives to conceptualize the definition of peace. Historically, scholars have defined peace as the absence of war or conflict (Diehl, 2016; Stephenson, 2017). This has become known as "negative peace" and is considered a non-comprehensive definition (Boersema, 2015).

The concept of positive peace, not considered the antonym of negative peace, has developed and been defined in many ways (Stephenson, 2017). Positive peace has been defined as, "the integration of human society," (Galtung 1964, as cited in Stephenson, 2017). This definition highlights the interpersonal aspect and the importance of community in finding peace. Other factors that must be considered in discussing peace in a community are, "integration and cooperation, mutual respect, justice, human rights, democracy, relative gender, ethnic, and economic equality, and truth," (Stephenson, 2017). This was echoed by Diehl (2016) in his definition of positive peace as taking into account the variations between people, and including, "conflict resolution, human rights, reconciliation, justice, economic development, human scrutiny, and gender," (p. 4).

It is important to note that while searching through

the literature, most definitions of peace are focused on Western definitions that tend to center on the absence of violence. Non-Western definitions from a variety of cultures do not focus on negative peace but take a more positive approach, "in the sense that peace means the presence of certain characteristics rather than the absence of negative characteristics," (Anderson, 2004, p. 102).

PLC's definition and indicator of peace at a personal level is "an individual feels safe, valued, and loved;" while community peace was described as "each person takes responsibility to build respect, responsibility, and good communication to work out conflicts and differences while proactively eliminating injustice and violence," (D. Batts, personal communication, October 7, 2021). As scholars continue to conceptualize peace, they view peace as an experience. "Peace is experienced by people and can therefore be measured by subjective evaluations," (Anderson, 2004, p. 104). Peace as an element of the experience of community building makes it inherently interpersonal, and thus can be linked to occupation. To explain further, peace can then be considered an element of the environment, and as occupational participation does not occur in a vacuum, influences performance of all activities.

Peace Assessments

Due to definitions and indicators of peace varying across people, organizations, communities, and countries, researchers have struggled to develop a well-rounded assessment tool to measure peace. The PLC, whose definition of community peace was previously stated, is an organization that serves a large community. With this broadly-spanning definition in mind, a brief review of existing literature was completed to identify possible assessment tools that could guide the OTS team in the creation of their peace measuring tool.

After reviewing multiple sources, several peace assessments were identified as potential models. While these assessment tools are not all-encompassing, they provide a starting point for peace measurement within the PLC's targeted community. The guiding assessments that were identified include the Peace Evaluation Across Cultures and Environments (PEACE) scale, Davenport Scale, Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Spiritual Well-being Scale (FACIT-Sp), and the Global Peace Index (GPI).

The PEACE scale is a "psychometric tool designed to assess an individual's experience of peace across multiple, related psycho-social domains" (Zucker et al., 2014, p. 2). In addition, this scale measures how "individuals rate their own sense of peace" (Zucker et al., 2014, p. 2). The Davenport Scale focuses on how, in the past, peace has been described as the absence of war; however, there has been a reconceptualization of the term in which it is not related to war or the absence of it. It develops guidelines on how to study peace, which could help create a specific measurement tool to measure peace (Diehl, 2016). One article discusses the FACIT-Sp and the difference and possible distinction between meaning and peace. The assessment is composed of 12 items that measure a variety of aspects that include peace, quality of life, mental health status, satisfaction, and well-being. The responses are recorded on a scale of 0-4 with 0 being "not at all" and 4 being "very much". The instructions also say to apply the statements within the past 7 days (Peterman et al., 2014). The GPI measures national peacefulness and "ranks 153 nations by its presence or absence of violence using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators that measure both the internal and external peacefulness of countries," (Sarangi, 2018, p. 8). Like its name, this instrument is used on a global level and measures the state of peace using three domains: "level of Societal Safety and Security, the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarization" (Sarangi, 2018, p. 8).

Overall, each of these assessments provides a different way to measure peace. While these tools assess peace at individual or global levels, they were utilized as a reference when creating a specific measurement tool to assess peace at a community level for the PLC.

Peace Statistics

As previously mentioned, two types of peace statistics have been gathered and described in relevant literature: negative peace, which pertains to the reduction and prevention of violence, and positive peace, which is relief from violence through lasting and sustainable social justice movements (Christie & Montiel, 2013). Centering on negative peace, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a violence prevention division that collects data and provides resources on a variety of violence topics, including child abuse and neglect, firearms violence, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). With the goal of preventing violence before it begins, the CDC utilizes the social-economical model as a framework for influencing individual, relationship, community, and societal factors to reduce violence before it occurs (CDC, n.d.). This emphasizes the need for data collection to occur on multiple levels. Whereas, the Peace Data Standard focuses on positive peace and has proposed a mechanism for monitoring technology use through four main components: group identity information, behavior data, longitudinal data, and metadata (Guadagno et al., 2018). By analyzing these factors, researchers purport that increasing positive engagement across different groups of people can be facilitated through technology use and can, ultimately, be utilized to monitor peace within a results-based economic framework (Guadagno et al., 2018). Both the negative peace and positive peace models provide a guideline for beneficial data points to monitor.

Many governmental agencies and major nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations that work to promote peace monitor their impact through the collection of data and statistics within the communities in which they work. The United States Institute of Peace is a governmental organization that, "promotes research, policy analysis, education, and training on international peace and conflict resolution in an effort to prevent and resolve violent conflicts, and to promote post-conflict stability," (United States Institute of Peace, n.d.). Some of the data points that are collected by this organization include violence-based deaths, houselessness and displacement, access to adequate food sources, crimes against vulnerable populations, and access to educational opportunities (United States Institute of Peace, n.d.). The Alliance for Peacebuilding (2021) is an international non-profit organization that monitors global peace. Data points that are collected by this organization include poverty level, infectious disease outbreak, local and widespread conflict occurrence, women's inclusion in peace processes, and youth violence (Alliance for Peacebuilding, 2021). Each of these major data points are used to quantify the impact of peacebuilding work and to measure the gaps that remain in peacebuilding processes.

RESULTS & CONCLUSION

To tackle the challenge of measuring peace and the peace-promoting process, a combination of the PLC's values and decades of research were analyzed. The PLC's mission, "to reduce violence and increase kindness" within their community incorporates elements of both negative and positive peace (Peace Learning Center, 2021). In accordance with Director of Programs Dountonia Batts' descriptions of personal and community peace, the two are intertwined yet separately defined. Based on the organization's priorities and existing research on peace and peacebuilding,

the OTS team comprehensively included both positive and negative peace and multiple levels of assessment, both at the individual and the community level, within peace measuring tools. The OTS team created three surveys that focused on the (1) presence/absence of personal and community violence, (2) physical, psychological, and social wellbeing, (3) connectedness to community, (4) perception of safety, respect, and justice, (5) perception of the ability to advocate for and to meet one's needs, (6) occupational participation levels. See Appendix B for a full list of survey questions for students K-5th grade, students 6-12th grade, and caregivers, following applicable health literacy guidelines.

To periodically monitor peace factors within the communities that they serve, a list of specific statistical measures and online databases were also provided to the PLC and can be found in Appendix C. Both the surveys and statistical measures provide appropriate means for the Peace Learning Center to gauge whether their community work is resulting in its intended effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS & DISCUSSION

Three surveys resulted from this process for the PLC to utilize as sustainable tools for measuring peace within their targeted community, Indianapolis public school students and families. The OTS team's recommendations for the survey include the following: utilizing a pre-post test method within a four-month timeline after the program is completed, distributing surveys electronically, maintaining privacy of the survey participants via respondent anonymity, and to increase survey participation through incentives. The survey data can then be utilized by the PLC staff to evaluate whether the program needs to be remodeled through improved training for facilitators, increasing follow-up training

for educators, increased resources post-PLC programming, or overall content recreation. These surveys can be utilized to provide valuable feedback for PLC's programming within Indianapolis public schools. This collaborative experience also served as a learning opportunity for the occupational therapy student group to engage in community-based work.

The Peace Learning Center provided feedback to the OTS team about the collaborative process and the anticipated plan of how the tools would be utilized. Having been previously unfamiliar with the role that occupational therapy practitioners can play in organizational consultation and program evaluation in a community setting, the PLC felt that the partnership provided them with a better understanding of how peace and occupational engagement are intertwined and relayed that the peace-measuring tools felt appropriate for use in their restorative justice programming.

In future community-based projects among occupational therapy practitioners and nonprofit organizations, it is important to keep several factors in mind. Due to challenges with staffing and resource shortages, communications between the OTS team and the PLC were limited beyond initial interviews and email correspondence. Because of this, the team had to continually remind themselves that their efforts should include short-term participation on behalf of the occupational therapy practitioners and should result in appropriately sustainable progress, based on the organization's access to resources. The OTS team recognized these communication shortcomings and acknowledged that future community-based occupational therapy practice should seek to create additional, feasible ways for community partners to be more collaborative throughout program evaluation processes, suggesting that doing so will help to increase the sustainability of projects.

Appendix A:
Emailed Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Needs Assessment Questionnaire
1. Has anything changed since you last proposed this problem to us?
2. Where do you want to focus your impact measurement first? (For example, within schools or businesses in which you work)
3. What data points do you currently collect and who handles that?
4. Specifically which communities do you target/serve in the Indianapolis area?
5. What time frame do you want to pass between pre- and post-participation surveys (in order to show evidence of change)?
6. What resources do you currently have to distribute the material/survey?
7. How many clients do you typically serve per week? Do you have a target percentage of clients that you would like to reach with the survey in order to have a successful initiative?
8. How would you suggest incentivizing participation in the survey by the targeted community members?
9. What is your definition and/or determinants of peace?
10. Do you currently remain in contact with your training sites post-implementation and what does this follow-up look like?
11. How high of a priority is this impact survey for your organization?

Appendix B:
Peace Measuring Tool for K-5 Students

Student K-5 Survey:
1. **I feel safe at home.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
2. **I feel safe at school.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
3. **I have someone I can talk to about my feelings.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
4. **I have a group of friends at school.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
5. **My family makes me feel loved.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
6. **My teachers and friends are nice to me.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
7. **My family is nice to me.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
8. **My teacher listens to me.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
9. **My family listens to me.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
10. **I am as important as my friends.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
11. **I have time to play every day.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
12. **I have things to play with.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
13. **When there is a problem, my friends and I can fix it together.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*
14. **I know how to work with friends to solve a problem.**
   a. *Yes, Sometimes, No*

Appendix C:
Peace Measuring Tool for 6-12 Students

Student 6-12 Survey:
1. **I feel safe in my home environment.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
2. **I feel safe in my school environment.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
3. **I have someone I can talk to about my feelings.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
4. **I feel included in my school community.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
5. **I feel included in my family.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
6. **I feel respected at school.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
7. **I feel respected at home.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
8. **I feel like I can speak up for myself in school.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
9. **I feel like I can speak up for myself at home.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
10. **I feel like my voice matters as much as my classmates' voices.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
11. **I am able to participate in the activities I want to participate in.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
12. **I have access to the resources I need to participate in activities.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
13. **I feel confident participating in a restorative justice conversation.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
14. **I understand what restorative justice means.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*

Appendix D:

Peace Measuring Tool for Student Caregivers

Caregiver Survey:
1. **I feel like my children are safe at home.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
2. **I feel like my children are safe at school.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
3. **My children have access to mental health resources.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
4. **I feel like my children are welcomed in their school community.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
5. **I feel like my children have a role within our family.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
6. **I feel like my children are respected at school.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
7. **My children feel valued at home.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
8. **I feel like my children's voices are heard at school.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
9. **My children feel comfortable speaking up at home.**
   a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
10. **My family is as important as other families in the community.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
11. **My children participate in the activities they want to participate in.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
12. **I am able to provide access to the activities my children want to participate in.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
13. **I feel like restorative justice practices work well at my children's school.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*
14. **I am aware of the restorative justice practices used at my children's school.**
    a. *Strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree*

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