The Effects of the Community Dance Program on Socialization and Emotional Competency in Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of the community dance program on socialization and emotional competency in individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). Twenty two people with ID were selected as participants: 11 were assigned to the experimental group; and the other were assigned to the control group. The community dance program was provided twice a week for 12 weeks. There were 24 sessions (60 min per session). Socialization and emotional competency were measured using a modified version of Korea Institute for Special Education-Scales of Adaptive Behavior (KISE-SAB; Kang, 2006) and Children Emotional Intelligence Standard for Teacher (CEIST; Lee, 2010). A series of Analysis of Covariances (ANCOVAs) were performed to analyze the data. Based on the results, people with ID who were provided with the community dance program (experimental group) had more positive socialization (i.e., sociality, play pattern, interpersonal skill, social responsibility, self-esteem, self-protection, and rules and laws) than those with ID who did not participate in the program (control group). Further, it was reported that the experimental group demonstrated more positive emotional competency (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill) than the control group.

Key words: Community dance program, Intellectual disability, Socialization, Emotional competency

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I. Introduction

Social interaction is an important part of overall individual development (Hartup, 1980; Parker & Asher, 1987). Positive social interaction during childhood is likely to lead to healthy relationships in adulthood. However, individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) often experience difficulty initiating social interaction with others due to significant limitations in adaptive behavior (e.g., a delay in language acquisition, a lack of communication skills or social problem solving, and poor occupational skills) and inability to identify, use, and manage the emotions of oneself (Taylar, 1985). Further, many community services are inaccessible, unresponsive, and inefficient to individuals with ID.

In addition, individuals with ID are more likely to live sedentary lifestyles than the general population (Hinckson & Curtis, 2013; Steele et al., 1996; Zwier et al., 2010). Several health care professionals suggested that appropriate physical activity program should be developed and provided individuals with ID to increase their social interaction and physical activity (Zeaman & House, 1979; Zigler & Balla, 1979).

Researchers reported that therapeutic physical activity and dance activity have the positive effects on creativity and expressiveness (Birdwhistell, 1970; Chodorow, 1984; Chodorow 1991; Jung, 2001; Kim, 2000; Kim, 2005; Kim & Jung, 2004; Schmais & White, 1968); and emotion, adaptive behavior, and sociality in individuals with ID (Chung, 2006; Kim, 2000; Kim & Jang, 2003; Leland, 1978; Ryu, 1996; Sim, 2000; Sloan & Birch, 1955). However, there is little known about a community dance program and its effects on socialization and emotional competency among individuals with ID.

In recent years, a community dance program has received great attention from many health care professionals (Han, 2008; Hwang, 2004; Tomkins & Brinson, 1995). Lee (2013) stated that a community dance program is designed to not only provide physical, psychological, and emotional benefits but also increases social interaction and recovery in individuals. Further, the community dance program emphasizes the importance of a sense of belonging and community regardless of age, disability, gender, religion, regional origin, social status, or socioeconomic status. However, a general dance program or therapy is unlikely to focus on social interaction and emotional domains of individuals with and without disabilities while dance id utilized as interventional medium in both the community dance program and the existing general dance program or therapy.

The memorable phrase of "We, people with disabilities, are no different, but we are just unique" indicates very well the true meaning of community dance programs (Kim, 2011, p. 23). According to Tomkins and Brinson (1995), a community dance program plays a leading role in improving social integration between people with and without disabilities. Because of the great potentials of a community dance program, the need of research is imperative for individuals with ID. Also, findings from this study may lead to important information that allows health care professionals to determine the most appropriate decisions to produce positive outcomes in individuals with ID.

Therefore, the purpose of the study was to determine the effects of a community dance program on socialization and emotional competency of individuals with ID. It was hypothesized that (a) there was a difference in socialization