

PIN Partners with Temple University OT Interns

By Chelsea and David, Temple University Occupational Therapy Interns



Temple University Occupational Therapy (OT) interns enjoy time with some of the PIN members. Chelsea and David pictured second and third from right, bottom row.

Throughout the month of June, PIN had the benefit of 2 interns from the Temple University Occupational Therapy program. These interns exposed the PIN team to fresh perspectives on how to support PIN members to grow in their independence and learn new strategies to make daily life easier. Below Dave and Chelsea share their experience of PIN:

Occupational therapy (or OT) and PIN fit together because both are focused on increasing member independence. The American Occupational Therapy

Association defines OT as “living life to its fullest.” At PIN, we did this through assisting members in initiating, participating, and completing activities important to each individual. Through our education at Temple University, we are exploring individual, group, and community interventions to increase performance.

This summer, we were able to get involved with PIN in numerous ways. Members participated in budgeting meetings and described greater understanding and awareness of personal

finances in follow-up meetings. They hosted friend dinners assisted by the occupational therapy students and made homemade meals for their friends. Members also opened their homes and participated in brainstorming sessions of how to better manage home life and chores. They explored various leisure pursuits in the PIN clubhouse and the Narberth community.

Each time we come to Narberth, we are amazed to see this formed community in action with each other and the surrounding borough. It was a wonderful honor to participate in the lives of PIN members, and we are looking forward to hearing about measurable ways the PIN members are becoming more independent in various life tasks.

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Creating a Balanced Life

By Ethan

We all live in a fast-paced, and sometimes chaotic society. Many PIN members have made conscientious efforts to learn and use tools that help them to feel more balanced and calm, and less anxious each day. In turn, these tools support their independence and work/life balance. Ethan C., a PIN member who has aspirations of supporting peers to manage feelings of anxiety and depression, shared his thoughts and strategies. He also interviewed 3 other PIN members to get their input on tools and ways to help alleviate anxious feelings and support life balance.



These are strategies I have used to feel more balanced and calm:

- It has been important for me to personally find ways to relax. I want to be a positive person, so I have worked to find ways to increase positive feelings and moments in my life.
- Counting to slow down the moment or to get to a place of calm can help give me time to think. It can help me think through and make a good decision.
- I do a few minutes of Tai Chi every morning. Tai Chi is a form of moving meditation. It is exercise that involves slow and intentional movements to relieve stress from the body and to recharge every day. It helps to start the day fresh with a joyful heart, and positive thinking. One good practice is balancing the heart, and it releases endorphins.
- It even helps to scream into a pillow to release stress in a safe way!

John B.

Why do you need to work on finding ways to feel calm?

I have a hard time slowing down to sleep at night. The problem is

I have a hard time quieting my mind. I always



have a too active mind. If my mind was quiet, I would go to sleep right away.

What do you do to help you sleep?

Meditation, yoga, and self-hypnosis all really help me. Listening to ocean sounds also really helps me! I use different guided meditation methods to help me relax my mind on a daily basis. I also go to yoga one or two times a week. Yoga is a great way to exercise and to practice another form of relaxation. I also use essential oils to help relax me. When I am getting ready for bed, I put a few drops of essential oils in my oil diffuser. This helps me wind down when I am ready to go to sleep.

One of the methods I also use is Muse (a device you wear on your head to assist with meditation. It provides support to deepen focus and meditation based on the state of the person's brain who is wearing the device). The problem is you have to use it regularly in order for it to recognize your brain.

My favorite to help me go to bed quickly is to listen to sounds with self-hypnosis. It counts you down and gives you the option to wake up or go to sleep. You can get it through Audible audiobooks or through the iTunes store. I like Eric Brown Hypnosis and Rachel Maddow Hypnosis.

Eliana T.

What strategies, apps or other things have you used in your life to help you feel balanced and calm?



I have used the 5 senses exercise.

If I wanted to start using that exercise, how would I begin?

I first did it in a group and it was facilitated by a group leader. You say out loud – 5 things you can see; 4 things you can touch; 3 things you can hear; 2 things you can smell; 1 thing you can taste. It is a grounding exercise. It helps me feel more grounded and secure. My favorite way to relax and escape is to listen to Ed Sheeran songs.

His voice is calming no matter what he is singing about.

Sam S.

Sam, do you have any strategies or apps that you use to help you relax, or help you through the day?



Actually, yes. I find that listening or singing along to music helps me destress myself. I have a little fun playing my own concert in my head, on my own stage, which is quite relaxing. I also like to use my skills of creativity to make artwork that I give as gifts, and possibly in the future to make pieces I can sell.

What kind of music do you like?

I am eclectic. I love anything from Billy Joel, Elvis Presley, The Monkees, country. I love even a little Kenny Chesney, which is always cool, and even a little Jimmy Buffett now and then.

How does music help you?

It helps me forget about things, and kind of go into my world where I get to relax and go into an area where I don't have to worry about doing anything professional, correct, or be judged. Music to me can never be wrong.

How does the artwork help?

Artwork is never wrong. To express my creativity, in a relaxing way, I am sharing my art with others.

When you are using these ways to stay calm, do you have a feeling that helps you transcend in some way?

When I am using these things, I can't be judged. No matter what people say about my music and art I won't be offended, because everyone has their own opinion. It is a way to escape judgement and criticism from others. It helps me put positivity into the world.

Things That Make *Our Lives Easier*



Chrissy B.

The SEPTA app helps me on a weekly basis because it tells me when the next bus is coming. At the moment, I am volunteering at Penn Wissahickon Hospice. In order to get to and from, I have to take the bus. I look on the app to see when the bus will be at the bus stop. The app also lets me know if the bus is going to be late or on time. Along with the SEPTA app, I use the calendar app on my phone. This app allows me to put in my social activities, as well as my volunteering schedule.

LISTEZ :

I use the ListEz app to help me make shopping lists, and can check off each item as I pick it up.



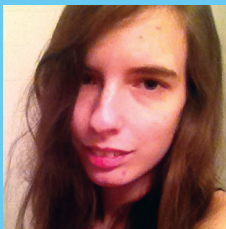
Jonathan S.

The Alexa device is set up in my bedroom where it can be heard from all around my apartment. I use it for daily reminders of my schedule and checking the weather. I am still discovering new features on the device that will further help assist me with my day-to-day life.



Kyle M.

The game that I play on my phone is not the most interesting game to play, but it does have its benefits. This game does take my mind off other things that may be bothering me at that moment. The game can get boring to play after time though, so this leads me to want to move on and do something else that may be more productive.



Elyse P.

Video games help me with my anxiety. They help keep my mind off of what I am worried about and more on the fun of playing a game.



Sam S.

I have a standard grocery shopping list set up on my phone. Each week I can just edit it to add what I need.



Nicole D.

I like to read my book when I feel like I need to calm down or get away from things that are bothering me. I pick a calm quiet place in my apartment, and I read for a few hours. This allows my thoughts to wander toward what is going on in the book rather than focusing on what is bothering me at that time. After I am finished reading I find that my brain is a lot calmer and I am able to think more clearly.



Aaron E.

Every week I work with someone from the PIN team to develop a weekly calendar. I put everything on my calendar that I need to do that week – chores, work, fun activities, and appointments. Each category is color coded. I keep the calendar on my refrigerator since I go there a lot.



Chrissy A. and Nicole D.

We have framed reminders hanging on our walls in the apartment. We have one to give us the steps to use the washer, dryer, and dishwasher. We have one next to our door to remind us of what we need when we leave, emergency contacts and our address.



David M.

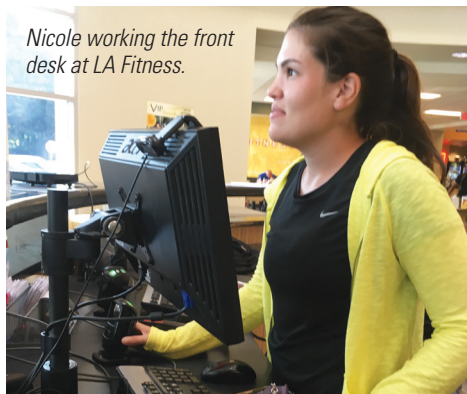
I use a Flip Fold to help me neatly fold my laundry. I also use a microwaveable omelet maker to make sure I start my day with a healthy breakfast.

Tools and Strategies that Help PIN Members on the Job

A major component of the support members receive from the PIN team is to find and keep jobs. Bernadette Shallow, the PIN Career Navigator, began working with PIN in October of 2016. She works collaboratively with the entire team to assist PIN members to develop strategies and accommodations on the job that support learning, and continued success. Some of the PIN members share what tools and support strategies are most helpful on the job.

Nicole D.

When I first started my job working the front desk at LA Fitness, the Career Navigator at PIN, Bernadette, created a reference packet of pictures and directions to help assist me with various tasks that I do at work. Over time I have learned how to do most of these tasks on my own, but I still keep the packet with me and use it every once in a while when I need a refresher.



Elyse P.

Teaching was the last job I ever thought I would have. I decided to give it a try when I was asked to teach kids how to draw anime and manga characters, because I wanted to pass on the joy of art. Many of

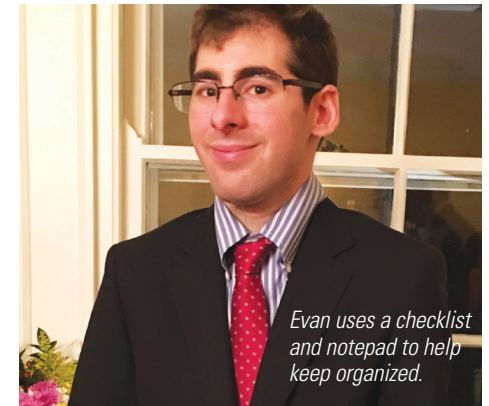
the students have learning disabilities, so as the teacher, I had to learn about what works for each student. Since I had never done any lesson planning, I had no idea where to begin. I met with the PIN team to research lesson ideas online. I decided to focus on one aspect or characteristic (ex. eyes, hair, body parts, background, etc.) each week to break the lessons down into smaller steps and pieces. I also used some of my art books to identify visual examples. At first, I worked with the PIN team to make lesson outlines, scripts, and timing. I never believed I would be able to make a career out of my hobby!



Evan R.

I use several tools at work that help me be successful. When I first started my job the Career Navigator, Bernadette, made me a morning check list so I would remember what to do each morning I got into work. This checklist was very helpful in the beginning, and now I have my routine memorized, and I no longer need the list. Another tool I use is when I record the attendance in the morning I use two rulers to help me focus on one column at a time so I do not lose my place. Lastly, when I feel overwhelmed

about something at work I sometimes take a quick break, take out my notepad and pen, then write down my thoughts. This helps me to be able to think more clearly. I also use this tool when I have down time in work to prevent me from becoming bored.



David M.

Natural supports through my coworkers and supervisors are what help me to be successful on the job. I work two jobs, Villanova Dining Services during the school year and Wawa during the summer. Both of these work places are teamwork environments that work great for me. I am not afraid to ask for help, and my coworkers are always willing to offer help.



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