



**amputee
coalition**TM



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M E D I C I N E

Improving Emotional Well-Being in People With Limb Loss: Feasibility Study

Executive Summary

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Background

- Effective programs to improve emotional well-being for people with limb loss are not widely available.
- Prosthetists have ongoing relationships with amputees and are well-positioned to educate patients regarding the signs of psychosocial distress and to provide information on resources for patients to seek appropriate care.
- Based on this background data, an innovative educational program for prosthetists to take a more active role to enhance the mental health and resilience of their patients was developed with support from an educational grant from Össur. The Amputee Coalition and Johns Hopkins University undertook to develop the Improving Well-Being Program (IWBP) and conduct an initial study. The work was divided into three phases:

Phase I

Data was collected from the focus groups conducted during the 37th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (AAOP) and in the community. These focus groups supported the basic assumptions of the project and confirmed its feasibility.

Phase II

The following program materials were developed: *An IWBP Implementation Guide*, *IWBP Assessment Tool*, *IWBP Resource Tool*, and Patient Satisfaction and Prosthetic Staff Evaluation forms.

Phase III

An initial evaluation of patient and provider satisfaction with program components was conducted at three sites. Both patients and prosthetic staff rated the program assessment and resources as generally helpful in assisting them in understanding their emotional well-being. Overall, patients and prosthetic staff were satisfied with the program; however, patients reported higher satisfaction than prosthetic staff. Qualitative feedback indicated that prosthetists needed assistance in identifying local resources that would help patients improve their emotional well-being.

Recommendations

The feasibility study and feedback from users provide solid data to support (1) dissemination of program materials and training of prosthetists and (2) to conduct an initial study of program efficacy. Both broader dissemination and demonstrating program efficacy will facilitate widespread utilization and sustainability.

Long-Term Goals

The long-term goals of the project are to improve the well-being of people with limb loss by developing scientific data and educational materials to support broad implementation of this pioneering program within the O&P community and incorporating training on programs that improve the emotional well-being of people with limb loss into the curriculum of nationally recognized prosthetic programs.

Working together, the Amputee Coalition, academic researchers, professional organizations and industry leaders can achieve these goals.