Analysis of Needs and Processes: Social Skills Program for Unemployed People with Disabilities

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Abstract
This study evaluated indicators of needs and processes in a social skills program for unemployed people with physical disabilities. The needs assessment — measured via self-reporting instruments — indicated the importance of preparing participants for job interviews and improving some social skills related to work, which would serve as a basis for the definition of the program's objectives. The skills developed in the program were as follows: civility, feedback, communication, empathy, offering help, citizenship, assertiveness, dealing with criticism, problem solving, job interview performance, and expressing positive feelings. For the process evaluation, the program's sessions were filmed and analyzed using indicators such as task performance. This study showed the importance of planning a program that considers the characteristics of the participants and of continuously monitoring its application to ensure the suitability of the intervention and the achievement of its objectives.
Keywords: social skills training, professional placement, physical disability, program evaluation, assessment of needs.

Análise de Necessidades e Processo: Programa de Habilidades Sociais Para Desempregados Com Deficiência

Resumo
Este estudo avaliou indicadores de necessidades e de processo em um programa de habilidades sociais para pessoas com deficiência física, desempregadas. A avaliação de necessidades, mensurada por meio de instrumentos de autorrelato, indicou a importância de preparar os participantes para entrevistas de emprego e de aprimorar algumas habilidades sociais relacionadas ao trabalho, servindo como base para a definição dos objetivos do programa. As habilidades desenvolvidas no programa foram: civilidade, feedback, comunicação, empatia, oferecer ajuda, cidadania, assertividade, lidar com críticas, resolução de problemas, desempenho em entrevista de emprego e expressão de sentimento positivo. Para a avaliação de processo, as sessões do programa foram filmadas e analisadas por meio de um registro que continha indicadores como desempenhos nas tarefas. Este estudo mostrou a importância de planejar um programa considerando as características dos participantes e monitorar continuamente sua aplicação para garantir a adequação da intervenção e o alcance de seus objetivos.
Palavras-chave: treinamento de habilidades sociais; inserção profissional; deficiência física; avaliação de programas; avaliação de necessidades.

Análisis de Necesidades y Proceso: Programa de Habilidades Sociales para Desempleados con Discapacidad

Resumen
El presente estudio evaluó indicadores de necesidades y proceso en un programa de habilidades sociales para personas con discapacidad física y desempleadas. La evaluación de necesidades, medida por instrumentos de autoinforme, señaló la importancia de preparar los participantes para entrevistas de empleo y mejorar algunas habilidades sociales relacionadas con el trabajo, sirviendo como base para la definición de los objetivos del programa. Las habilidades desarrolladas en el programa fueron: civilidad, feedback, comunicación, empatía, ofrecer ayuda, ciudadanía, asertividad, lidiar con críticas, solución de problemas, desempeño en entrevistas de empleo y expresión de sentimiento positivo. Para evaluación de proceso, las sesiones del programa fueron filmadas y analizadas mediante un registro que contenía indicadores como el desempeño en las tareas. Este estudio mostró la importancia de planear un programa considerando las características de los participantes y controlando su aplicación para garantizar la adecuación de la intervención y el alcance de sus objetivos.
Palabras clave: entrenamiento de habilidades sociales; inserción profesional; discapacidad física; evaluación de programas; evaluación de necesidades

Introduction

Physical disability is an anatomical or physiological alteration of the human body that impairs its motor or locomotion capacity — the condition can be congenital or acquired, stable or progressive, and variable in severity (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2003). Physical disability results in a variety of stressors specific to this condition, from motor restrictions on performing or participating in certain activities to the presence of prejudice and

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discrimination in society, which may limit these people's opportunities for social interaction (Wilson, Washington, Engel, Ciol, & Jensen, 2006).

The difficulties of including people with physical disabilities in the work world have attracted the attention of researchers and professionals (Coutinho, Rodrigues, & Passerino, 2017; Lorenzo & Silva, 2017; Tripney et al., 2017). Research has indicated that in relation to the representative number of working-age individuals with disabilities, a large portion are not included in the labor market (Brasil, 2017). The justifications for non-compliance with the legislation — which, in Brazil, guarantees reserves of job vacancies for disabled people in companies with at least 100 employees — range from the employer's difficulty in finding candidates with a disability who have a profile compatible with market requirements to a lack of priority or knowledge of the organizations in promoting accessibility and adaptation of workplaces (Coutinho et al., 2017; Lorenzo & Silva, 2017).

Given the possible risk factors associated with unemployment and the inclusion of people with disabilities in formal work, for example, lack of job opportunities, low wages, prejudice regarding potentiality, and inadequate working conditions (Coutinho et al., 2017; Lorenzo & Silva, 2017; Tripney et al., 2017), there is evidence of the importance of the use of Social Skills Programs (SSPs) for the professional development of these individuals (Lindsay, Adams, McDougall, & Sanford, 2012; Phillips, Kaseroff, Fleming, & Huck, 2014; Soresi & Nota, 2000).

Social skills can act as a protection factor for professional placement because they help people with physical disabilities deal with the demands of assertiveness (e.g., those related to the defense of their rights to accessibility and adaptation of workplaces) and expand friendships and social support links, which may increase opportunities for interaction and exposure to different professional contexts and activities (Murta & Guimarães, 2007; Wilson et al., 2006). Work-related SSPs have previously been tested with young people with and without disabilities and have shown that learning social skills contributes to more satisfactory performance in job interviews and in the activities of the role, especially in measures that have assessed initiative and the ability to interact with others in the workplace (Campos & Almeida, 2010; Donohue et al., 2005; Lindsay et al., 2012; Lopes, Gerolamo, Del Prette, Musetti, & Del Prette, 2015; Phillips et al., 2014; Soresi & Nota, 2000).

Despite the importance of promoting social skills for people with physical disabilities, no specific intervention for this population was identified in the review conducted by Murta (2005) of the national production of training programs with Brazilian samples in the area. In the national literature, there remains a shortage of interventions aimed at the development of social skills among people with physical disabilities (Azevedo & Costa, 2018). In the international literature, it is possible to identify many studies on people with disabilities preparing for work (Lindsay et al., 2012; Phillips et al., 2014; Soresi & Nota, 2000), and there are also investigations monitoring the teaching objectives of these programs. Generally, the practices are more focused on basic skills (e.g., clothing, hygiene, punctuality, and frequency) than on more complex social skills such as cooperation and control of emotions (Chu & Zhang, 2015). Additionally, the data available in the literature show SSPs with different populations and diverse arrangements, including interventions of just a few days or several years in duration, in individual or group formats, and conducted in therapeutic environments or natural work situations (Campos & Almeida, 2010; Phillips et al., 2014; Tripney et al., 2017). Despite the heterogeneity of the interventions, even in the international literature, it is difficult to identify research that evaluates SSPs for people with physical disabilities who are searching for employment (Tripney et al., 2017).

In the search for the effectiveness of the interventions and the need to foster the methodological rigor of these studies (Tripney et al., 2017), the literature has been focusing on the importance of evidence-based psychological practices (EBPPs) (American Psychological Association, 2005). EBPPs apply principles in the planning of interventions that integrate scientific evidence of therapeutic or preventive practices with the evaluation of the characteristics of the person or target public, considering also their context and culture (American Psychological Association, 2005). Consistent with the EBPP movement, Del Prette and Del Prette (2011) argued that SSP should analyze characteristics of the process that are potentially associated with the effectiveness of the outcomes of the intervention.

In the process analysis, Del Prette and Del Prette (2001a) drew attention to the importance of the sessions in developing the target social skills according to the objectives, which, in order of increasing complexity, are as follows: (a) in the initial sessions, the development of basic skills is recommended, some of which are understood to be process skills and are characterized as

educational or therapeutic because they favor a context of mutual support in the group; (b) in the intermediate phase, maintaining the learning of the basic skills and of the new social skills is expected; and (c) the final phase is devoted to learning more complex skills. In general, the teaching procedures involve cognitive-behavioral techniques (instructions, behavioral testing, modeling, homework) associated with the use of experiences (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2011; Gresham, 2009; Murta, 2005). When used in a manner that is articulated with the target behavior and with the arrangement of contingencies, the teaching procedures become valuable resources for achieving results and for maintaining and generalizing the social skills learned (Gresham, 2009; Kazdin, 1982).

Considering the importance of social skills for the inclusion of physically disabled people in the work world, in addition to the scarcity of interventions for this population, and given the evidence of needs and process analysis compared with the results (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2011; Murta, 2005), this study seeks to describe indicators of need and process in an intervention with physically disabled people who are unemployed. The study focuses specifically on the analysis of the following: (a) the deficiencies in and capabilities of the social skills of the participants, which guided the program planning; and (b) aspects of the process, characterized by participant attendance and performance in the specific tasks that are indicative of progress and achievement of the objectives.

Method

The study was guided by the resolution of the National Health Council according to the Guidelines and Norms Regulating Research Involving Human Beings and was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University (Ruling 095/2006).

Participants and data collection location

Several institutions that work with physically disabled people were contacted to disseminate the research and enlarge the sample through different contacts. The participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) having a physical disability, (2) identifying as unemployed and in search of placement in the labor market, (3) not having yet participated in a social skills program, and (4) consenting to participate in the study.

Thus, 16 people with physical disabilities participated in the study — 50% with an innate disability and the other half with an acquired disability. The classification of the participants' physical disabilities included amputation of four fingers of a hand, amputation of both legs and one finger of a hand, tetraparesis (decreased movement or partial loss of motor function of four limbs — upper and lower), hemiparesis (right or left hemisphere of the body with decreased movement), and paraplegia (no movement of the lower limbs). Participants used the following resources: walker, wheelchair, crutches, orthosis, and prosthesis.

The participants formed two groups according to the location of their institutions: Group 1 (G1: $n = 8$) and Group 2 (G2: $n = 8$). The two groups did not have significant differences in age ($t = 1.451$ and $p = 0.169$), and mean and standard deviation values were similar (G1: $M = 29.0$ and $sd = 5.8$; G2: $M = 24.9$ and $sd = 5.6$). According to the Brazilian Economic Classification Criterion, they were also of similar socioeconomic level ($t = -1.322$ and $p = 0.208$), distributed among classes B, C, and D. The majority of the participants in both groups were female (G1: $n = 5$ and G2: $n = 6$) and had completed high school (G1: $n = 6$ and G2: $n = 6$), although there was one participant with uncompleted elementary education (G1), two with completed elementary education (G1 and G2), and one with uncompleted higher education (G2). In G1, all of the participants had previous employment experience, and in G2, six had such experience.

The study was conducted in two institutions according to the composition of the sample: G1, an entity linked to the Municipal Welfare Department of a medium-sized city in the state of São Paulo, and G2, a philanthropic association located in a small city in the state of São Paulo.

Instruments

The *Inventário de Habilidades Sociais (Social Skills Inventory;* IHS-Del-Prette) (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001b) is a self-reporting instrument for evaluation of the repertoire of adults' social skills. The scale presents 38 items that describe interpersonal situations in various contexts with different interlocutors and varying demands of social skills. Based on the estimate of the frequency with which one may react in each item and considering the total number of times a situation occurs, respondents indicate their response on a five-point Likert scale, from 0 = never or rarely to 4 = always or nearly always. The instrument produces a total score

and scores on five subscales: Factor 1, confrontation and self-assertion with risk; Factor 2, self-assertion in the expression of positive feelings; Factor 3, conversation and social resourcefulness; Factor 4, self-exposure to strangers and new situations; and Factor 5, self-control of aggressiveness. The IHS-Del-Prette has a satisfactory internal consistency standard ($\alpha = 0.75$). With the responses from the sample of this study, the Cronbach's alpha also revealed a satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.80$).

The *Questionário de Autoavaliação do Preparo para Inserção Profissional* (*Self-Evaluation of Preparation for Professional Placement Questionnaire;* QAPIP) was prepared by the authors for this study. This questionnaire, comprising only open questions, sought to obtain information about the characterization and needs of the participants. It sought to define topics that would elicit answers associated with the needs of the target public in the context of professional placement to guide intervention possibilities. The following topics and the corresponding questions were considered: socio-demographic data, professional experience and experience in the selection process ("Do you have any professional experience?" and "Do you have any experience in the selection process for a job vacancy?"), self-evaluation in the selection process ("What were the feelings experienced?" and "How would you evaluate your own performance in the selection processes?"), and professional expectations ("Tell me about what you expect from your professional future").

Interpersonal Difficulties Scale (IDS). This scale comprises 28 items related to social skills and is based on the IHS-Del-Prette (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001b). Individuals are instructed to rate their degree of difficulty on a five-point Likert scale from 0 (no difficulty) to 4 (great difficulty). The Cronbach's alpha — analyzed with the sample from this study — indicated satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.81$).

Record of Sessions Observation. Based on the criteria proposed by Del Prette and Del Prette (2001a) and Murta, Sanderson, and Oldenburg (2007), this instrument was developed to obtain indicators to analyze progress monitoring, the support context of the group, and the achievement of the objectives. It has eight operationally defined indicators: attendance at the session (being present at the session), doing the homework (reporting the completion of the homework assigned by the facilitator in the previous session), engaging in the activities (following instructions for a certain activity or technique and showing interest and willingness to do so), complimenting colleagues (verbalizing or demonstrating, by gestures or facial expressions, satisfaction with the performance or output from the performance of colleagues), offering support to colleagues (responding by verbalizations, gestures, facial expressions, or physical contact requesting help or to the affective demand of a colleague with difficulty), reporting problems (talking about problems or difficulties, whether past or present, whether personal or family), reporting progress (referring to positive change in one's own social skills repertoire or that of another member of the group because of engagement in the program), and reporting generalization (mentioning performing the social skills practiced in the program in other environments or the comments of other people about their acquisition). These indicators are measured in terms of the frequency with which such behaviors occurred during the time the sessions were conducted.

Procedure for data collection and analysis

The QAPIP was answered in a group setting to characterize the participants and evaluate their needs. The answers to the open questions were grouped into thematic categories, including the frequency of recommendations for each category. The results were analyzed considering the general sample ($N = 16$) since the same intervention would be maintained with both groups.

The IHS-Del-Prette was also applied in a group setting before the intervention. In the data analysis, the scores were computed and classified according to the percentile position as unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or excellent for the general sample, following the procedures of the manual and the normative reference (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001b). The frequency of participants in each classification was calculated.

The IDS data, obtained through the use of the instrument in the group setting, enabled identification of the indicated social skills as being quite difficult or completely difficult. These results were computed by frequency and were considered critical items and indicators of the need for intervention.

For the process evaluation, the sessions were filmed with a digital camcorder from the beginning to the end of each encounter. The first author attended 31 sessions (considering both groups) and filled in the Record of Sessions Observation, which contained indicators described objectively. The reliability of the records was calculated, comparing the evaluation of the researcher (P) with that of two judges — specialists in psychology and special education (C and D) who had

been oriented and trained beforehand. Three complete sessions, chosen by lottery, were taken from each group for reliability analysis (a total of 540 minutes), which were as follows: one in the initial phase (Sessions 1 to 5), one in the intermediate phase (Sessions 6 to 10), and one in the final phase (Sessions 11 to 16). In G1, the agreement index (double PC) was 79.2%, while in G2 (double PD) it was 87.5%; both were deemed satisfactory (Kazdin, 1982). Considering that the process conditions could differ for G1 and G2, these indicators were compared, adopting a non-parametric test (Mann-Whitney) and a level of significance less than or equal to 5%.

Results

Assessment of needs

The QAPIP indicated that with regard to experience in the selection process, eleven participants had experience and five had not yet experienced this situation. Among those who had experienced a selection processes before the study, four evaluated their performance as good, four as average, two as very good, and one as poor. Considering the stages of a selection process, the majority of the participants reported preferring interviews because they are more reserved situations that are easier to adapt to. In the selection process situations, according to the reports of 12 participants, the feeling most experienced was anxiety. The following were also cited: nervousness (n = 4), fear (n = 4), and hope (n = 1). One person reported feeling inferior when the result was negative. In the participants' reports, these feelings, in relation to selection processes, were associated with coping with an unknown and uncontrollable situation as well as insecurity, family expectations, and high expectations of obtaining employment, given that they had been unemployed for some time. Regarding future expectations, fourteen participants reported the hope of employment, and one reported the hope of attending college.

The IHS-Del-Prette factors classified with a higher percentage of participants who had an unsatisfactory repertoire were evaluated as critical in relation to the others and, therefore, are indicators of the need for intervention, as shown in Figure 1.

In addition to the Total Score (n = 7), three factors were considered critical: F2, self-assertion in the expression of positive feelings (n = 8); F3, conversation and social resourcefulness (n = 8); and F5, self-control of aggressiveness (n = 8), in accordance with the

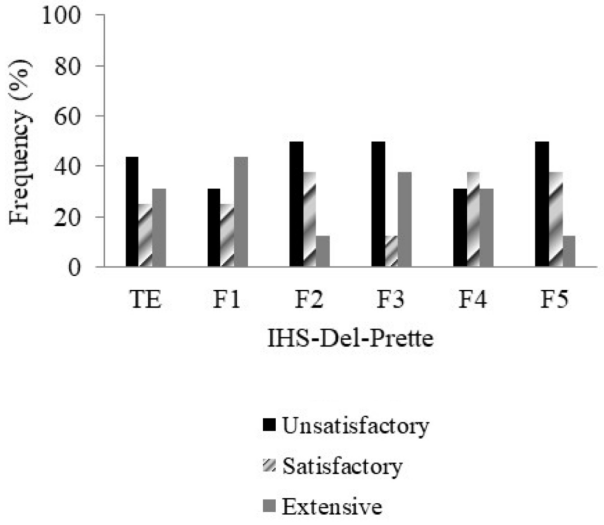

Figure 1. Frequency of participants (N = 16) with a repertoire of unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and extensive social skills

IHS-Del-Prette reference sample. Clearly, the majority of the sample reported an extensive repertoire for F1 (confrontation and self-assertion with risk), despite a significant number classified as unsatisfactory.

In the case of the IDS, the critical items were public speaking (n = 8), dealing with authority (n = 5), negotiating (n = 4), dealing with criticism (n = 4), asking questions (n = 4), asking for something (n = 4), dealing with colleagues' jokes (n = 3), ending a conversation (n = 3), putting yourself in someone else's position (n = 3), requesting changes in behavior (n = 3), expressing dislike (n = 2), asking for favors (n = 2), greeting strangers (n = 2), making suggestions (n = 2), disagreeing with authority (n = 2), refusing abusive requests (n = 2), disagreeing with the group (n = 1), acknowledging errors (n = 1), participating in conversation (n = 1), and maintaining conversation (n = 1). Four items were rated by most participants as not being difficult: appreciating compliments (n = 14), offering help (n = 14), saying "please" and "thank you" (n = 13), and defending others in the group (n = 10).

Based on the data obtained with these instruments and the literature in the area of social skills relevant to the professional context (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001a; Donohue et al., 2005), it was possible to identify deficits in social skills (assumed to be needs of the participants) and, from these, to develop the objective of the intervention for the program. The program, which

focused on the acquisition and improvement of social skills relevant to participation in job selection interviews and for interpersonal-professional performance, was structured into two weekly sessions of approximately 90 minutes each, totaling 16 sessions. The organization of the sessions is shown in Table 1.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation was measured in the two groups during the intervention sessions. Figure 2 shows the results in each session in the "attendance" indicator.

Participation in G1 ranged between 75% (n = 6) and 100% (n = 8). In G2, the frequency ranged from 62.5% (n = 5) to 100% (n = 8). Comparing these results

Table 1.
Social skills promoted in the program

Stages	Objectives
Process skills Sessions 1 to 5	Improve the ability to observe and describe performance during experiences and in situations outside the sessions
	Improve performance when using different types of questions, such as confirmatory questions (Did you do this?)
	Develop the different stages of conversations (begin, maintain, and finish)
	Stimulate the use of compliments
	Practice appreciation
	Develop the group feeling
	Show good manners
	Improve communication
	Use specific terms from interactions
	Practice the skills of giving and requesting feedback
Intermediate skills Sessions 6 to 9	Identify opportune occasions and begin, maintain, and finish conversations
	Change performance according to verbal, non-verbal, and paralinguistic "tips" of the interlocutors in the conversation
	Appreciate kindness
	Show affection
	Practice non-verbal expressiveness
More complex skills Sessions 10 to 16	Relate facial expressions and feelings
	Name feelings
	Relate feelings to events
	Practice empathy
	Identify rights and duties of people with disabilities
	Value the claiming and defending rights
	Identify criteria for classifying social performance as assertive, aggressive, or passive
	Practice the skill of giving and receiving criticism
	Control the impulsiveness to react to criticism
	Desensitize oneself when in a situation involving criticism
	Develop the skill of apologizing and acknowledging errors
	Develop the skills to define and solve problems at work
	Understand the importance of decisions and control impulsivity in these situations
	Talk to people of authority
	Develop arguments
	Develop posture for the job interview
	Talk about oneself

between the groups, the Mann-Whitney test did not indicate a significant difference (U = 120.0, z = -0.324, p = 0.746). In general, high attendance was observed in both groups during the program.

Another important indicator in the process evaluation was the inspection of the homework activities (HAs) assigned at the end of each program session. Figure 3 shows the number of participants who completed each of the 14 HAs.

Figure 3 indicates that approximately half of the participants in each group regularly performed the task of each session. The Mann-Whitney test did not indicate a significant difference between the groups (U = 119.5, z = -0.327, p = 0.744).

Table 2 presents other results from the Record of Sessions Observation.

The comparison between the two groups indicates that the results were similar in these indicators, with the exception of "reporting problems" (U = 75.000, z = -2.039, p = 0.041), which was higher for G2. The data show that "reporting problems" recurred throughout the sessions for both groups, and from the fourth session onward, the continued presence of the other indicators — particularly "complimenting colleagues" and "offering support to colleagues" — characterized a welcoming environment in both groups. It was also clear that the reports of progress and generalization began to occur even before the halfway mark of the sessions, which suggests that the participants were learning to observe themselves and situations in the natural environment in the early stages of the intervention.

The results also indicated that the "engaging in activities" indicator recorded 100% frequency in nearly all sessions. The Mann-Whitney test indicated no significant difference (U = 126.0, z = -0.082, p = 0.935), which shows that from the beginning of the program, the participants were interested and willing to perform the activities and use the techniques developed in the sessions.

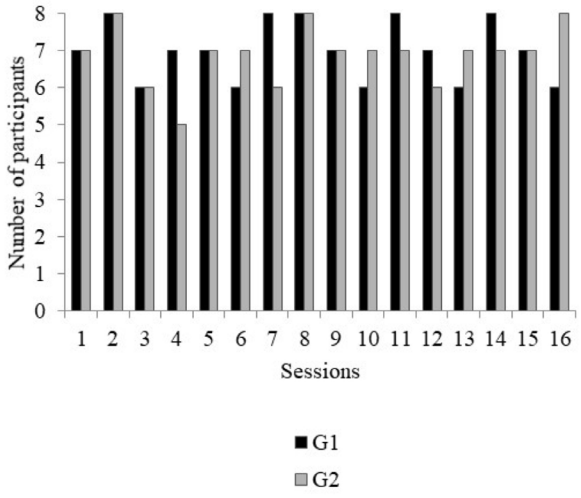

Figure 2. Attendance of the participants of G1 (n = 8) and G2 (n = 8) in each session

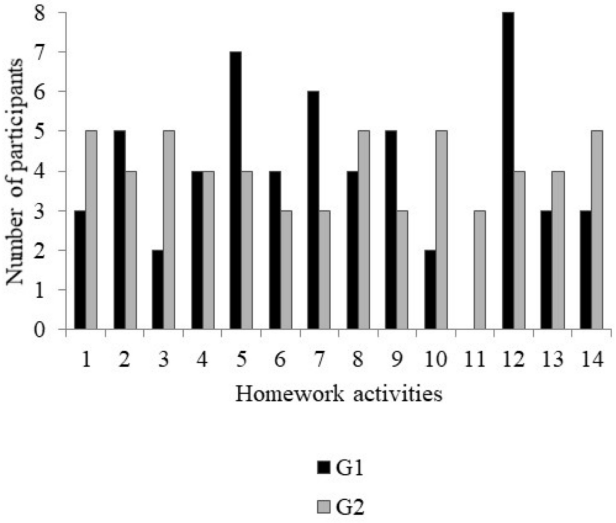

Figure 3. Number of participants from G1 (n = 8) and G2 (n = 8) who completed the homework activities assigned in each session

Discussion

In the QAPIP, the participants reported a greater need to be prepared for job selection interviews as well as interpersonal-professional performance. The interview situation may have become aversive to the participants, perhaps because of anxiety related to exposure and evaluation or because of the results and implications. Even participants who had not yet experienced a job interview may have had feelings of anxiety, nervousness, and fear because of not knowing how to deal with the demands of the context. The negative experiences related to selection processes may also have been the result of the lack of preparation and the lack of equality in the actions taken by the companies in the recruitment and selection of candidates with disabilities. Another problem may be a business context that, in most cases, does not recognize their role in inclusion,

Table 2.
Frequency of Process Indicators in the Record of Sessions Observation

		Sessions																Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
Complimenting colleagues	G1	-	-	-	5	8	1	-	2	4	1	-	1	-	14	8	2	46
	G2	4	-	-	1	3	1	1	2	2	-	-	2	2	-	1	2	21
Offering support to colleagues	G1	-	-	4	23	6	6	4	6	9	3	5	8	1	5	4	5	89
	G2	1	1	3	3	6	1	4	3	8	5	9	5	4	12	4	4	73
Reporting problems	G1	3	-	2	2	5	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	-	-	3	31
	G2	2	-	3	2	4	3	6	-	10	5	3	3	1	9	5	4	60
Reporting progress	G1	-	-	-	4	-	-	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	12
	G2	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	2	-	2	-	2	1	1	-	-	12
Reporting generalization	G1	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	8
	G2	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	-	8

consistent with Coutinho et al. (2017) and Lorenzo and Silva (2017), which suggests that such situations of risk can affect the vulnerability of this population. Therefore, overcoming this vicious circle — which would increasingly compromise the possibilities of their already difficult professional placement — is a necessity for those with disabilities.

In accordance with the IHS-Del-Prette, the needs assessment also indicated a relatively high percentage of participants with an unsatisfactory repertoire of social skills, especially in the areas of "self-assertion in the expression of positive feelings," "conversation and social resourcefulness," and "self-control of aggressiveness." In turn, the participants' scores on the IDS highlight their difficulties with public speaking, addressing authority, negotiating, asking questions, and dealing with criticism. These skills were suggestive of a need for intervention, showing the relevance of separately analyzing the difficulty (subjective cost) and the frequency of social skills (measured by the IHS-Del-Prette). In other words, these results showed that an individual can perform such skills competently, however, with a high response cost and, consequently, with a high probability of displaying evasive and avoidant behavior in situations that require these skills, resulting in adverse effects on psychological and professional adjustment.

This characterization contributes to guiding specific procedures; for example, the majority of the sample reported an extensive repertoire of the "confrontation and self-assertion with risk" factor (indicator of assertiveness), which indicates the perception of frequently exhibiting this class of social skills. However, on the IDS, it was possible to identify subclasses of social skills related to this factor (e.g., "requesting changes in behavior"), which were evaluated as difficult for the sample and, therefore, suggestive of a higher response cost, which may reduce the proficiency with which the skill is exhibited — characterized, in the field of social skills, as a lack of fluency (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2005; Gresham, 2009). In the example given, the convergence of these findings resulted in including the objective of developing this class of social skills (Sessions 10 to 16 — Table 1) while taking care to prepare procedures that would enable the participants to confront the great difficulty and high frequency of this group of skills. The participants needed to address the relationship between the proficiency and functionality of these skills according to the demands of the situation.

However, the low frequency of displaying learned ability indicates unsatisfactory performance, thus requiring (for its improvement) intervention for inhibitory or competing personal and environmental factors, such as behavior problems, lack of feedback, reinforcement failures, and excessive interpersonal anxiety (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2005; Gresham, 2009). To illustrate with the results of the needs assessment of this study, the "self-control of aggressiveness" factor was classified as a performance deficiency on the IHS-Del-Prette. The improvement of these skills was inserted

into the final phase of the program to promote them using techniques such as instruction, modeling, and positive reinforcement.

Three phases of the program were developed according to the objectives and the complexity of the social skills, as recommended by Del Prette and Del Prette (2001a). The first section was designed to train the participants in the basic skills of interactions with people in various social contexts. These skills continued to be promoted throughout the intervention. In the intermediate sessions, skills that addressed the participants' complaints were taught, preparing them for more complex situations, which were scheduled for the final phase of the intervention. In all of the sessions, the social skills were related to professional situations.

Thus, the definition of the objectives of the program and the procedures used in each session was based on the characteristics of the participants and the context (American Psychological Association, 2005). Some of the social skills developed were also included based on the analysis of the demand, that is, the expectation of specific actions in certain professional situations (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001a). Possibly, the evaluation of the deficiencies and capabilities of the participants on the survey of needs and the possibility of intervening in the discussions on the analysis of the interpersonal demands in professional situations contributed. Thus, the same intervention was designed although based on the needs of each group and applied separately for G1 and G2, obtaining similar results.

Attendance suggests that the structure and procedures of the program were satisfactory for the acceptance and involvement of the participants. Even for those who had to be absent, some strategy was offered so that they could take advantage of the topic discussed, such as a phone call to know the reason for the absence and explain the homework assignment, offering the possibility of doing the assignment during the week and discussing it in the subsequent session. The availability of transportation adapted to meet the demands of people with specific needs — as offered by one of the institutions (G2) — also contributed to attendance as it offered support so that the service provided could be utilized. These strategies to try to ensure presence are especially critical in the beginning (Murta et al., 2007), given that afterwards, it is expected that attendance and participation will be guaranteed by natural reinforcement associated with improvement of the repertoire and the coexistence with the facilitator and the colleagues in the group. Also of particular note is the fact that both groups comprised people with varying physical limitations, which contributed to the results being similar even though the intervention was designed based on the needs of G1 and G2.

Although the number of participants who completed the homework activities was average, the results of the "reporting generalization" indicator — similar in both groups — suggest that, even during the development of the program, the participants began to display the different social skills classes with different interlocutors (relatives, friends, and unknown people) and in diverse contexts (family, leisure, and job interviews) of the natural environment. This result reinforces the findings of Gresham (2009) on the importance of creating generalization through homework activities and with significant social skills for the natural environment and for overcoming participants' grievances. To generate such skills increases the likelihood of reinforcing the gains the participants made in acquiring these skills.

The occurrence of behaviors such as complimenting colleagues, offering support to colleagues, and reporting problems suggests that each group became increasingly welcoming throughout the program. Involvement in the activities also implies that participation in the program was motivating and consistent with the expectation — already indicated in the assessment of needs — of overcoming shortcomings and difficulties. The development of "process skills" such as complimenting and supporting others favored cohesion and the maintaining of the group, a sense of acceptance and belonging, analysis of difficulties, and the bond of friendship, as suggested by the literature (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001a; Phillips et al., 2014; Soresi & Nota, 2000; Wilson et al., 2006). Certainly, the development of these skills establishes reinforcing contingencies for the participants, with positive therapeutic implications for everyone and for attaining the final goals of the intervention.

The results of the "reporting progress" indicator showed that the program was perceived positively by the participants and generated benefits for both groups, which suggests changes in their repertoire of social skills, even during the intervention. This progress was also sustained after the program. In another publication evaluating the same intervention (but with the specific selection of the pre- and post-test and follow-up results), positive effects on the acquisition and increasing frequency of social skills and the quality of social performance in job interviews and professional situations were identified and were maintained for a period

of two to four months for the majority of the variables measured (Pereira-Guizzo, Del Prette, & Del Prette, 2012). Another important fact was that seven participants (43.75% of the sample) obtained employment during the final period of the intervention, attributing their achievement to participation in the program.

Thus, the decisions made for the intervention planning, the continuous monitoring of the application and adaptation of the program to the participants' needs and context demands, the facilitator's experience, and the results achieved are important concerns in the search to frame this program among EBPPs. The identification of evidence-based practices in special education has been a significant advancement in the field, given that it contributes to generating more effective interventions and producing more positive results for the development of people with disabilities, as indicated by Cook and Odom (2013) and Tripney et al. (2017).

Final Considerations

This study showed the deficiencies and capabilities of participants' social skills, which guided the planning of the program and aspects of the process and which, together with the analysis of needs, were indicators of the intervention's effectiveness. Thus, this study presented evidence of the feasibility of implementing this intervention with unemployed physically disabled people in other institutions.

Some limitations of this study are recognized, and recommendations for new studies are highlighted. A small sample limits the generalization of the results. Future studies involving the application of the program with an expanded sample and in different regions of the country could validate such results and strengthen the evidence bases of the program.

The results of generalizing the acquisitions to different contexts and interlocutors should also be viewed with caution, considering that self-reporting was the primary source of information. Future research could examine the generalization of the social skills practiced with important people in professional contexts (e.g., selectors, managers, or supervisors).

The process analysis generated some indicators, among many others, that could evaluate the program itself. New studies could broaden the process analysis indicators and even suggest that the participants themselves report procedures that could be applied differently or be included. It is also suggested that studies improve the evaluation of the cost-benefit of the dissemination of this program to strengthen the evidence of public utility.

This study provided some practical contributions for professionals and researchers: the importance using the group's experiences to teach social skills, avoiding excessive instructions, emphasizing performance, observing accessibility, and identifying the need for other resources that enable the participation of this population. The continuing of this research by professionals or researchers would contribute to the adoption of EBPPs in the community.

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