



## Homelessness

This Evidence Spotlight provides some key reading, selected from the evidence base, about homelessness. It is intended to provide an introduction to the topic. Each paper is listed under a broad subject heading, alongside related CPD activities applicable to the pillars of the RCOT Career Development Framework (RCOT 2017).

Homelessness is a growing concern in the United Kingdom. Recent reports of the number of households placed in temporary accommodation (Fondation Abbé Pierre and FEANTSA 2019) and the number of rough sleepers (St Mungos 2019) show an increase in both since 2010.

People who experience homelessness can have complex health and social care needs, and are at risk of occupational deprivation and injustice. Occupational therapists therefore have a role to play in working with people who are homeless, and those transitioning towards being housed. This may include helping people to develop and enrich their skills and engage in meaningful occupations, access education and training, seek employment and obtain appropriate accommodation.

### References:

Fondation Abbé Pierre, FEANTSA (2019) *Fourth overview of housing exclusion in Europe 2019*. Brussels: FEANTSA; Paris: Fondation Abbé Pierre. Available at: [https://www.feantsa.org/download/oheeu\\_2019\\_eng\\_web5120646087993915253.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/download/oheeu_2019_eng_web5120646087993915253.pdf)

St Mungo's (2019) *Rough sleeping and social housing: briefing for MPs*. London: St Mungo's. Available at: <https://www.mungos.org/app/uploads/2019/06/St-Mungos-briefing-rough-sleeping-and-social-housing-June-2019.pdf>

## Overview

The following articles have been selected by an RCOT Professional Advisor to provide material that will be of interest to occupational therapists, students and practice educators. The articles cover a number of areas, from occupation-based practices for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness (Roy et al 2017) and the lived experience of homeless/recently housed people (Cunningham and Slade 2019, Marshall et al 2019), through to emergency department presentations (Lloyd et al 2017) and the transition to becoming housed (Gutman and Raphael-Greenfield 2017, Marshall et al 2018).

# Selected Evidence

## Career Development Framework Pillars

### Suggested CPD activities

#### Facilitation of Learning Professional Practice

Consider the areas of practice identified in the study. Are there any additional areas where there may be a role for occupational therapy?

#### Facilitation of Learning

After reading the article, reflect on how the experience of homelessness can transform how daily occupations are perceived, including the concept of 'survival occupations'.

#### Facilitation of Learning Professional Practice

Consider the ways in which boredom can impact on health and wellbeing. Identify potential interventions that occupational therapists might offer.

## Occupation-based practices and homelessness

Roy et al (2017) carried out a scoping review to identify current/potential practices to enable or support the occupations of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. 178 papers were selected, in areas that included: occupational performance skills training, enrichment of occupational repertoire, child/family services, occupational transition from homeless to housed and community building.

#### Reference:

Roy L, Vallée C, Kirsh BH, Marshall CA, Marval R, Low A (2017) Occupation-based practices and homelessness: a scoping review. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 84(2), 98–110.

## The lived experience of homelessness from an occupational perspective

Cunningham and Slade (2019) conducted a qualitative study, involving five men residing in a homeless hostel in the UK. Participants took photographs of their daily occupations and participated in semi-structured interviews, to describe their lived experience of occupational engagement whilst rough sleeping/living in a hostel.

#### Reference:

Cunningham MJ, Slade A (2019) Exploring the lived experience of homelessness from an occupational perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 26(1), 19–32.

## Boredom and meaningful activity

Marshall et al (2019) conducted a mixed-methods pilot study, including interviews, to explore the nature and impact of boredom among homeless and recently housed people ( $n=13$ ). Findings showed that boredom was described as a profound and pervasive experience, and there was a strong positive correlation between meaningful activity and mental wellbeing.

#### Reference:

Marshall CA, Davidson L, Li A, Gewurtz R, Roy L, Barbic S ... Lysaght R (2019) Boredom and meaningful activity in adults experiencing homelessness: a mixed-methods study. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, Apr 15. [Epub ahead of print].

## Emergency department presentations

Lloyd et al (2017) examined historical data from an Australian emergency department (ED), to gain an understanding of the profile and needs of people seen by a Homeless Emergency Department Liaison Officer, in comparison to general attendance at the ED. A further aim of the study was to explore the potential role for occupational therapy. Findings included that the most common reasons for homeless people attending the ED were medical, mental health and drug/alcohol related issues.

### Reference:

Lloyd C, Hilder J, Williams PL (2017) Emergency department presentations of people who are homeless: the role of occupational therapy. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 80(9), 533–538.

## Effectiveness of a supportive housing programme

Gutman and Raphael-Greenfield (2017) utilised a two-group controlled design to assess the effectiveness of a housing transition programme for homeless adults with chronic mental illness and substance use. Goal attainment scaling and quality of life ratings were used as outcome measures, to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the intervention and control group post-intervention.

### Reference:

Gutman SA, Raphael-Greenfield EI (2017) Effectiveness of a supportive housing program for homeless adults with mental illness and substance use: a two-group controlled trial. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 80(5), 286–293.

## Occupational transition from homelessness to becoming housed

Marshall et al (2018) conducted a qualitative study to explore occupational transition in the context of leaving homelessness. Eleven people with a history of chronic homelessness participated in semi-structured interviews three to 24 months after becoming housed. Data analysis revealed six themes, including: 'coping with the quiet' 'negotiating substance use' and 'occupations to give back'.

### Reference:

Marshall CA, Lysaght R, Krupa T (2018) Occupational transition in the process of becoming housed following chronic homelessness. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 85(1), 33–45.

## Facilitation of Learning Professional Practice

Reflect on the findings of the study, and identify ways in which occupational therapists might work with homeless people presenting at Accident and Emergency departments.

## Facilitation of Learning

Consider factors that may impact on a person's transition to housing after experiencing homelessness.

## Facilitation of Learning

After reading the article, write a reflective log about any aspects of the participants' experiences that challenged your preconceptions.

## Access to journal articles

RCOT members can access the full text of these articles via the e-journals collection or, in the case of open access articles, via the link/DOI provided in the reference.

Access the RCOT e-journals collection at: [www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/journals-and-e-journals](http://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/journals-and-e-journals)

The journals and e-journals webpage provides links to the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* (AJOT), *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal* (AOTJ), *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* (BJOT) and *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* (CJOT).

A wide range of other journals, including the *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, are available via the 'additional RCOT e-journals' link.

## Career Development Framework

*The Career Development Framework: Guiding Principles for Occupational Therapy* (RCOT 2017) is an over-arching set of guiding principles for occupational therapy and offers a structured process to guide careers, learning and development within our profession. It contains four interacting Pillars of Practice (each with nine Career Levels):

- Professional Practice
- Facilitation of Learning
- Leadership
- Evidence, Research and Development

Access the framework at: [www.rcot.co.uk/cpd-rcot](http://www.rcot.co.uk/cpd-rcot)

## Further reading

Members can access a wide range of literature through the RCOT Library e-books and e-journals collections, as well as via the CINAHL and Medline databases.

The Library has produced a series of information skills guides to help members get the most of the resources available. They cover a range of subjects, from accessing the e-journal and e-books collections, through to searching databases and carrying out literature searches.

Access the guides at: [www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/information-skills](http://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/information-skills)

The Library catalogue is available at: [www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/search-library-catalogue](http://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/search-library-catalogue)

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