

## Occupation evidence summary

This can be used to support discussions about occupations, shaping innovative occupation-focussed service delivery or building a business case for quality improvements. Students, learners and educators might also find it useful as a summary of the current research.

This summary is the result of a mini evidence search and not a comprehensive search.

### Scope/questions covered in the evidence search

The search found evidence to help to answer the following questions:

- What is occupation?
- What do occupational therapists mean by occupation?
- What is the value of occupation?
- What happens in practice?

This summary covers evidence from the last five years (2019-2023).

### Definitions

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists published a document of definitions used by member organisations.

[wfot.org/resources/definitions-of-occupational-therapy-from-member-organisations](https://wfot.org/resources/definitions-of-occupational-therapy-from-member-organisations)

This is the definition we have used in this summary:

Daily activities that reflect cultural values, provide structure to living and meaning to individuals; these activities meet human needs for self care, enjoyment and participation in society.

The most recent definition found from the search comes from the American Occupational Therapy Association.

<https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>

The framework defines occupation as **'personalized and meaningful engagement in daily life events by a specific client'**.

Activity is 'a form of action that is objective and not related to a specific client's engagement or context (Schell et al., 2019) and, therefore, can be selected and designed to enhance occupational engagement by supporting the development of performance skills and performance patterns'.

The article gives further explanation and examples of occupations.

Fisher (2013) proposed an occupation related taxonomy distinguishing between the terms occupation-centered, occupation-based and occupation-focussed as follows:

- **Occupation-centred practice** – holds occupation as the central focus of therapy and aligns practice with the core theoretical tenets of the profession.
- **Occupation-based** – direct engagement in occupation as the means of evaluation or intervention.
- **Occupation- focussed** – occupation may not be the medium used in therapy, but occupational engagement is the intended outcome of therapy.

A scoping review by Ford et al (2022) concluded that occupation-based and occupation-focussed terminology were used interchangeably and inconsistently in literature. The authors suggested that it is timely to consider how this is problematic for our professional identity and perceptions of occupation in practice.

In summary, occupation-based practice was represented in various ways in the literature:

- Addressed occupational issues using occupation as the therapeutic medium to increase occupational engagement.
- Applied the term occupation-based to refer to practice that broadly addressed physical or mental health, which was done with links to occupation. Some studies aimed to address physical or mental health through decontextualised discussions of performance components that aimed to increase occupational engagement across many aspects of life. These included topics such as stress management, fatigue management and pain management.
- Described research, theory, and practice tools.

Some authors agreed that occupation-based practice needed to include occupation in the therapeutic process.

Generally, when papers described occupation as the therapeutic medium, they also emphasised the inclusion of client-driven goal setting and interventions.

## **What is the value of occupation?**

Occupations generally focus on:

- Self-care
- Being productive
- Leisure

These examples are taken from RCOT's web page on commissioning occupational therapy.  
[rcot.co.uk/about-occupational-therapy/commissioning-occupational-therapy](https://rcot.co.uk/about-occupational-therapy/commissioning-occupational-therapy)

A search was conducted using some of those examples to see if strong evidence was available that highlighted the impact of occupation-based interventions. Many papers reflect that more research is needed. However, positive outcomes that were reported in the research include:

- Improvements in activity participation
- Health, sleep

Beisbier et al (2020) conducted a systematic review to examine the effectiveness of activity and occupation-based interventions to promote instrumental activities of daily living. Examples included occupation and activity-based interventions in a school setting such as organised activities at break-time, after-school activities, class game time, had a positive change on student participation in physical activity. This intervention came under the theme of health maintenance and management. If students participate more in physical activity that will have a benefit on their overall health and fitness.

Other interventions fell within the scope of diet and nutrition. For example, an after-school programme covering cooking, nutrition and gardening. Outcomes under this category included improvements in healthy eating behaviours.

Activities under the category of 'rest and sleep' (sleep preparation activities, sleep education, coaching, cognitive activities for skills in relaxation, and sleep hygiene) improved overall sleep outcomes. Quality rest is essential to overall health, well-being and occupational participation.

- **Improvements in performance of activities of daily living**

Laverdure et al (2021) reported that interventions under the theme of supporting engagement in occupations included adaptive skills training to help children with ASD, young children with cerebral palsy participating in ADL tasks in an adaptive environment, children with idiopathic arthritis participating in a clinic-based and home programme all showed improvement in occupational engagement and activities of daily living.

Authors found that engagement in occupations and activities, practice within and across environments, and coaching and feedback improved participation and performance in ADLs and functional mobility.

- **Social connection and social relationships, communication**
- **Mood, reduced levels of distress, reminiscence**

Durocher et al (2021) focused on the benefits of art activities in long-term care settings. Fourteen papers were included in the review and eight of those included participants with dementia. Four outcomes were identified: improvement in mood, improving quality of life and wellbeing, improvements in reminiscence and verbal and non-verbal communication, the creation, establishment, deepening and maintenance of social relationships for older adults in long-term care.

Ng et al (2023) looked at the benefits of occupational participation in outdoor spaces. One of these included social engagement. Social isolation decreased following an outdoor activity intervention.

## **What happens in practice?**

Aside from discussions in the literature regarding definitions of occupations and occupation-based practice, there are several reviews that gathered qualitative data from recent graduates investigating their understanding of occupation and using occupation in practice.

Occupation is challenging to define but as Bolt et al (2022) found in their study, being able to use occupation-based practice increases job satisfaction.

Two papers offered approaches to facilitate occupation-based practice. One paper (Bolt et al, 2022) focussed on a hospital setting and suggested student interprofessional activities and a buddy system for new graduates. The other (Roberts et al, 2022) surveyed students and suggestions included practice examples and encouraging students to think about occupation in their own lives.

Taylor et al (2022) looked at the Model of Human Occupation in forensic mental health settings. This was a small-scale Australian study that found MOHO was beneficial in ensuring patient-centred, occupation-focussed therapeutic reasoning.

## References

### Definitions

1. **American Occupational Therapy Association (2020) Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process—Fourth Edition. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 74(Supplement 2).** <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>

“The fourth edition of the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process (hereinafter referred to as the OTPF–4), is an official document of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). Intended for occupational therapy practitioners and students, other health care professionals, educators, researchers, payers, policymakers, and consumers, the OTPF–4 presents a summary of interrelated constructs that describe occupational therapy practice.”

2. **Black MH, Milbourn B, Desjardins K, Sylvester V et al (2019) Understanding the meaning and use of occupational engagement: Findings from a scoping review. British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 82(5), 272-287.** <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308022618821580>

**Introduction:** It is theorized that occupational therapy practice is underpinned by the construct of occupational engagement, with a focus on examining the subjective meaning of occupation. The theoretical definition of occupational engagement presents significant challenges to its use, evaluation, and measurement within evidence-based contemporary occupational therapy practice.

**Method:** A scoping review was conducted to examine how occupational engagement is defined within occupational therapy literature and how occupational engagement is evaluated.

**Results:** Twenty-six journal articles were identified. Definitions were fragmented and inconsistent across studies. Key themes relating to definitions of occupational engagement included active involvement in occupation, finding value and meaning, balanced engagement, subjective experience of engagement, developing identity through occupation, and social and environmental interactions. Measures seeking to understand occupational engagement were varied across studies, with a consistent measure applied only in the area of mental health.

**Conclusion:** The lack of consistency in definitions and measurement of occupational engagement presents significant issues for occupational therapy practice and evaluation. There is a need for a common definition of occupational engagement to be applied in the literature. Outcome measures seeking to understand occupational engagement are also required; however, these rely on a clearly defined construct.”

3. **Ford E, Di Tommaso A, Gustafsson L, Molineux M (2022) ORD, Describing the occupational nature of practice: a scoping review. Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 29(5), 353-362.** <https://doi.org/10.1080/11038128.2021.1968949>

**Background:** Describing how occupation is used in practice can be challenging for occupational therapists. Occupation-centred, occupation-based, and occupation-focussed terminology are frequently used interchangeably and ambiguously to describe practice. However, ambiguous language creates confusion and inadequately demonstrates the value of occupation.

**Aims/Objectives:** This scoping review aimed to identify how occupation-centred, occupation-based, and occupation-focussed terminology are defined and represented in occupational therapy literature.

**Materials and methods:** A five-step scoping review included papers published between 2014 and 2019 from four databases. Extracted data were summarised to outline how the terms were being used within the literature.

**Results:** Initial searching yielded 819 articles and 35 papers met inclusion/exclusion criteria. Within current literature, occupation-focussed and occupation-based terminology were inconsistently described. A limited number of articles used occupation-centred and occupation-focussed terminology to describe practice, whilst occupation-based was more prominent. Occupation-based terminology was represented in numerous ways to describe assessments, practice tools, interventions, research, and theory. Discrepancies between the description and implementation of occupation-based practice were most prominent within interventions.

**Conclusion and significance:** Findings demonstrated that occupation-based and occupation-focussed terminology were used interchangeably and inconsistently in literature. It is timely to consider how this is problematic for our professional identity and perceptions of occupation in practice.”

4. **Iwama MK, Thomson NA, Macdonald RM (2009) The Kawa model: The power of culturally responsive occupational therapy. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 31(14), 1125-1135.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638280902773711>

‘The Kawa (Japanese for river) model, developed by Japanese and Canadian rehabilitation professionals, presents an important and novel alternative to contemporary ‘Western’ models of rehabilitation. Rather than focussing primarily on the individual client, the Kawa model focusses on ‘contexts’ that shape and influence the realities and challenges of peoples’ day-to-day lives. The first substantial model of rehabilitation practice developed outside of the West illuminates the transactional quality of human-environment dynamics and the importance of inter-relations of self and others through the metaphor of a river’s flow. The model’s reflection of Eastern thought and views of nature presents a useful point of comparison to familiar rational and mechanical explanations of occupation and well-being. In this article, the rationale for an alternative model in rehabilitation is presented, followed by an explanation of the structure and concepts of the Kawa model. Implications for culturally responsive practice as well as the model’s significance to the advancement of culturally safe rehabilitation worldwide are discussed.’

5. **Kielhofner G, Burke, JP (1980) A Model of Human Occupation, Part 1. Conceptual Framework and Content. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 34(9), 572-581.**  
<https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.34.9.572>

‘This paper, the first of four, presents the structure and content of a model of occupation. The model is proposed as the first step in the development of a paradigm of occupation for the field of occupational therapy and is designed for application in practice and research. It draws upon the theory of open systems to build a structural framework. Concepts relevant to human occupation are integrated into this framework. Subsequent papers will add concepts to the model and demonstrate its application in clinical practice.’

6. **Law M, Baptiste S, McColl M, Opzoomer A (1990) The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure: An Outcome Measure for Occupational Therapy. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 57(2), 82-87.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/000841749005700207>

‘The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, in collaboration with Health and Welfare Canada have developed and published a conceptual model for occupational therapy, the Occupational Performance model. This paper describes the development of an outcome

measure, The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM), which is designed to be used with these guidelines for client-centred clinical practice. The COPM is an outcome measure designed for use by occupational therapists to assess client outcomes in the areas of self-care, productivity and leisure. Using a semi-structured interview, the COPM is a five step process which measures individual, client-identified problem areas in daily function. Two scores, for performance and satisfaction with performance are obtained. This paper describes the rationale and development of the COPM as well as information about its use for therapists.'

7. **Law M, Cooper B, Strong S, Stewart D, Rigby P, Lotts L (1996) The Person-Environment-Occupation Model: A Transactive Approach to Occupational Performance. Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy. 63(1), 9-23.** <https://doi.org/10.1177/000841749606300103>

'Occupational therapy theory, practice and research has increasingly emphasized the transactional relationship between person, environment and occupation. Occupational performance results from the dynamic relationship between people, their occupations and roles, and the environments in which they live, work and play. There have, however, been few models of practice in the occupational therapy literature which discuss the theoretical and clinical applications of person-environment interaction. This paper proposes a Person-Environment-Occupation Model of occupational performance which builds on concepts from the Occupational Therapy Guidelines for Client Centered Practice and from environment-behaviour theories. The model describes interactions between person, occupation and environment, outlines major concepts and assumptions, and is applied to a practice situation.'

8. **World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2018) Definitions of occupational therapy from member organisations.** <https://wfot.org/resources/definitions-of-occupational-therapy-from-member-organisations>

This document includes the WFOT Definition of Occupational Therapy (2012) and Statement on Occupational Therapy (2010); and the definitions of occupational therapy used by WFOT Member Organisations.

### Value of occupation

9. **Beisbier S, Laverdure P (2020) Occupation- and activity-based interventions to improve performance of instrumental activities of daily living and rest and sleep for children and youth ages 5--21: A systematic review. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 74(2).** <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.039636>

**Importance:** Practitioners seek evidence from intervention effectiveness studies to provide best-practice services for children.

**Objective:** To examine the effectiveness of occupation- and activity-based interventions to improve instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) and sleep outcomes for children and youth ages 5–21 yr.

**Data sources:** MEDLINE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, ERIC, OTseeker, and Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

**Study selection and data collection:** The American Occupational Therapy Association research methodologist conducted the first review of literature published from 2000 to 2017. The results were exported, and we completed the subsequent stages of review. Only peer-reviewed Level I, II, and III evidence was reviewed. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines and the Cochrane risk-of-bias guidelines were used to compile evidence and risk-of-bias tables.

**Findings:** We reviewed 96 articles; 28 studies met the inclusion criteria for IADL and rest–sleep outcomes. Analysis resulted in several themes: rest–sleep, health management (nutrition–dietary, physical activity–fitness, wellness), and the IADLs of driving, communication management, and safety. Strong evidence exists for interventions embedded in school programming to improve physical activity and fitness and for sleep preparation activities to maximize quality of rest and sleep. Moderate-strength evidence exists for interactive education and skills training interventions to improve health routines, dietary behaviors, and IADL participation and performance.

**Conclusions and relevance:** Use of skills-focused training in activity- and occupation-based interventions was supported. Service provision in the context of natural environments, including school settings and with parental or caregiver participation, is recommended for children and youth ages 5–21 yr with varied abilities and diagnoses.

**What this article adds:** Occupational therapy practitioners can confidently examine their current practices and choose activity- and occupation-based interventions and methods of service delivery that are supported by evidence.”

10. **Durocher E, Njelesani J, Crosby E (2022) Art activities in long-term care: A scoping review. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 89(1), 36-43.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00084174211064497>

**Background:** Outcomes of using art in therapy overlap with goals of occupational therapy with older adults in long-term care, which include improving and maintaining health and well-being through engagement in occupations. There is a lack of evidence about how art activities could complement or inform occupational therapy.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this scoping review is to map existing literature about how art activities are used in long-term care.

**Methods:** Six electronic databases were searched. Fourteen studies met inclusion criteria and were analyzed to identify patterns and discrepancies.

**Findings:** The analysis suggests **art activities can contribute to well-being by improving mood, promoting communication and reminiscence, and supporting the development and deepening of social relationships.** **Implications:** Occupational therapists should consider incorporating art activities as these offer therapeutic benefits and can be adapted to individual strengths and preferred type and level of participation.”

11. **Laverdure P, Beisbier S (2021) Occupation- and activity-based interventions to improve performance of activities of daily living, play, and leisure for children and youth ages 5 to 21: A systematic review. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 75(1).**  
<https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2021.039560>

**Importance:** The findings support the use of occupation- and activity-based interventions to improve the occupational participation of children and youth with disabilities.

**Objective:** To examine the effectiveness of occupation- and activity-based interventions to improve participation and performance in activities of daily living (ADLs), play, and leisure in children and youth.

**Data sources:** MEDLINE, PsycINFO, CINAHL, ERIC, OTseeker, and Cochrane Database of

Systematic Reviews; reference lists of retrieved articles; and tables of contents of selected journals were searched to identify peer-reviewed studies published between 2000 and 2017.

**Study selection and data collection:** Studies addressing occupation- and activity-based interventions and outcomes for children ages 5 to 21 were selected and appraised using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols guidelines, evaluated for risk of bias, and synthesized to develop practice recommendations.

**Findings:** Fifteen Level I (meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and randomized controlled trials), 5 Level II (two groups, nonrandomized), and 3 Level III (one group, pretest-posttest, retrospective) studies were examined and categorized by type of intervention and outcome. Each study used occupation- or activity-based interventions and reported ADL, play, or leisure outcomes. Intervention themes identified include supporting engagement in occupations, supporting participation with cognitive supports, and using technology to support occupational participation and performance.

**Conclusions and relevance: Strong evidence indicates that engagement in occupations and activities, practice within and across environments, and coaching and feedback improve participation and performance in ADLs and functional mobility.** Moderate evidence supports the use of collaborative goal setting, modeling, and guided participation in play and leisure. Moderate evidence also supports technological interventions for ADL, play, and leisure performance.”

12. Ng L, Oliver E, Laver K (2023) **Beyond garden design: A review of outdoor occupation in hospital and residential care settings for people with dementia.** *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*. 70(1), 97- 118. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1440-1630.12826>

### Introduction

Access to outdoor space is widely recommended for people with dementia. However, there is limited information on the occupations of people with dementia within these spaces. We sought to review the research literature to identify the occupations of people with dementia in outdoor spaces in residential aged care and/or hospitals and report on features that support occupational participation as well as the benefits of occupational participation in these spaces.

### Methods

Scoping review. We searched electronic databases involving health, design, and horticulture literature. Studies were included if they involved people with dementia and considered occupations within gardens or garden-like spaces of hospitals, subacute rehabilitation facilities, or residential aged care.

### Results

We identified 19 articles meeting the review criteria. Outdoor spaces for people with dementia varied in design and supported a range of occupations with the most common being social occupations, gardening, and physical activities. **Quantitative studies suggested that benefits of outdoor occupations for people with dementia were improvements in activity participation, social connection, mood, agitation, light exposure, and sleep. Qualitative studies supported these findings and identified additional perceived benefits such as engagement, maintaining identity, health, and reduced levels of distress. Benefits were also reported for families and staff.**

### Conclusions

Current literature shows that many occupations can be done outside and that these are beneficial for people with dementia. Despite the wide range of benefits, multiple studies reported

that outdoor spaces remain under-utilised. More work is required to design spaces for occupational engagement, support access to outdoor spaces, and promote occupational participation.”

13. **Spalding K, Gustafsson L, Di Tommaso A (2022) Occupation-based group programs in the inpatient hospital rehabilitation setting: A scoping review. *Disability and Rehabilitation*. 44(10), 2138-2148.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2020.1813818>

**Purpose:** Occupation-based practice involves the inclusion of meaningful occupations in the therapeutic process and is promoted within hospital-based general rehabilitation contexts for individual clients or within a group setting. The purpose of this paper is to summarise the current literature regarding the types of occupation-based group programs used within general inpatient rehabilitation and the reported outcomes.

**Methods:** A scoping review was conducted and included papers if they described an occupation-based intervention, delivered in a group setting, conducted in an inpatient rehabilitation hospital context, with an adult population. Studies were collated, summarized and key findings are presented.

**Results:** Ten articles met inclusion criteria. **The results indicate that occupation-based groups are used in inpatient rehabilitation across a variety of settings, the approach is valued by the occupational therapy profession and it appears to have an influence on patient satisfaction and experience.** However, the impact on a patient's confidence and occupational performance outcomes post-inpatient rehabilitation remains unclear.

**Conclusions:** There is a dearth of evidence on the impact of occupation-based group service focus in the inpatient rehabilitation setting. Considering the importance of occupation to the profession, further investigation into the use of this approach in a group setting is required. Implications for rehabilitation Occupation-based groups are used in inpatient rehabilitation to achieve more therapy time but there is variability in group processes and outcomes measured. Patient centred occupation-based groups appear to have an influence on patient satisfaction and experience. For the occupation-based groups reviewed, providing explicit links between patient goals, therapeutic activity and real life was important for improving outcomes. There is a growing focus for the use of occupation-based groups in occupational therapy and more research is needed to establish effectiveness.”

14. **Wall G, Isbel S, Gustafsson L, Pearce C (2023) Occupation-based interventions to improve occupational performance and participation in the hospital setting: A systematic review. *Disability and Rehabilitation*.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2023.2236021>

**Purpose:** To critically review the evidence for occupation-based interventions in improving occupational performance and participation outcomes in the hospital setting.

**Methods:** Five databases were searched from 2000-2022. Peer-reviewed studies of any design investigating the impact of occupation-based interventions in the hospital setting were included. Methodological quality was assessed using the appropriate tool for each study design. Following data extraction, a narrative synthesis was conducted.

**Results:** Thirty-three studies comprising of 26 experimental, five non-experimental, and two mixed methods studies were included ( $n = 1646$  participants). Results indicate good evidence to support occupation-based interventions to improve occupational performance and participation

outcomes in inpatient rehabilitation; it is unclear whether they are more effective than any control/alternative intervention. Research in the acute and mental health hospital settings were scarcer. Understanding the benefits of occupation-based interventions was enhanced through qualitative results including improving independence and confidence to discharge home, increasing motivation for therapy, connecting with others, and peer-based learning.

**Conclusions:** Heterogeneity and methodological weaknesses across existing studies limits the conclusions that can be drawn on the impact of occupation-based interventions in the hospital setting. More rigorous research should be conducted with better reporting of intervention design and the use of robust measures of occupational performance. Implications For Rehabilitation. The use of occupation-based interventions should be considered to improve occupational performance and participation outcomes in the hospital setting. There is good evidence to support the impact of occupation-based interventions on improving occupational performance and participation outcomes in the inpatient rehabilitation setting; evidence in the acute and mental health settings is scarcer. **Occupation-based interventions are valued by both patients and clinicians for their impact on patient outcomes and the patient experience.”**

### What happens in practice?

Occupational therapists' experiences of implementing occupation-based practice

15. **Bolt B, Lalor A, Barclay L, Brown, S, Growse L (2022) Occupational therapists' experiences of implementing occupation-based practice in neurology, and its impact on professional identity. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 85(8), 595-602.** <https://doi.org/10.1177/03080226211058368>

**Introduction:** Facilitating engagement in meaningful occupations underpins occupational therapy intervention. Occupation-based practice, while linked to improved professional identity and job satisfaction for occupational therapists, is challenging to implement, particularly in hospital settings. This study aimed to explore occupational therapists' perceptions of their role, and facilitators and challenges to implementing occupation-based practice in neurology.

**Method:** This qualitative descriptive study included semi-structured interviews with seven occupational therapists working in Australian acute/sub-acute neurology settings.

**Findings:** Three themes identified: Conceptualisation versus implementation of occupation-based practice; Use of occupation-based practice impacts role satisfaction; Promoting the profession. Participants described using occupations in their practice as important, however, reported that the challenges of the neurology environment hindered their ability to carry out occupation-based practice.

**Conclusion:** This study provides insights into occupational therapist's perceptions regarding occupation-based practice in neurology settings, finding there is a need for occupational therapists to promote their role and use of occupations in neurology settings, and that occupation-based practice impacts job satisfaction. The study highlights occupational therapists working in neurology settings would benefit from a number of approaches including student interprofessional activities, potential buddy system for new graduates and experienced clinicians, and increased support by the profession to maintain their identity as occupation-based specialists.”

### Occupational therapists' understanding of occupation

16. **Cho E, Osenga S, Forwell S, Lee Bunting K (2023) Understanding occupation in Canada: Recent graduates' perspectives. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 30(4), 488-496.** <https://doi.org/10.1080/11038128.2023.2173646>

**Background:** A robust occupational perspective can fortify an occupational therapist's professional identity, which is especially important as occupational therapists can struggle with professional identity. Occupational therapy curricula are critical to the development of an occupational perspective. Recent graduates can offer valuable insights on an occupational perspective, having transitioned from occupation-centred curricula into often medicalised practice settings.

**Aims:** This study explored how recent graduates from Canadian entry-level occupational therapy master's programs understand the concept of occupation.

**Materials and methods:** Using an interpretive descriptive approach, rooted in constructivism, 13 English-speaking graduates (2017, 2018, 2019) from Canadian entry-level occupational therapy master's programs were purposively recruited to participate in semi-structured interviews. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse data, informed by reflexivity and member-checking.

**Results:** Four themes were described: (1) occupation: more than doing, (2) occupation is broad, abstract, and context-dependent, (3) occupation is not well understood: the fall out, and (4) navigating the challenge of describing occupation.

**Conclusion:** Participants' experiences aligned with much of the previous literature, including the challenges of describing occupation and frustrations with navigating this in practice. Yet, participants described how flexible and critical understandings of occupation facilitate the use of an occupational perspective across practice settings, supporting professional resilience."

17. **Di Tommaso A, Wicks A, Scarvell J, Isbel S (2019) Experiences of occupation-based practice: An Australian phenomenological study of recently graduated occupational therapists. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 82(7), 412-421.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0308022618823656>

**Introduction:** The call for occupational therapists to embrace occupation-based practice has increased in recent decades. Little is known about how occupational therapists perceive and implement occupation-based practice. This study aims to uncover the experiences of new and recent graduates using occupation in their practice.

**Method:** A phenomenological design guided the development of semi-structured interviews. New and recent Australian occupational therapy graduates were interviewed about their experiences of occupation in their practice. Interview transcripts formed the data and themes were developed by thematic analysis.

**Findings:** Eighteen occupational therapists were interviewed. Three main themes emerged from the data. Overall, graduates found it challenging to embrace occupation in their everyday practice, deciding it is more pressing to remediate impairments than to enable occupations. Some participants stated that occupation-based practice was unrealistic given the efficiency pressures of their practice environments. However, graduates felt that with more experience they would be able to implement occupation in their daily practice.

**Conclusion:** Recently graduated occupational therapists in Australia find it challenging to consistently implement occupation in their daily practice. Confidence to apply occupation-based skills is an important factor for implementing occupation in practice. Some recent graduates are choosing impairment-based techniques over occupation-based practice."

18. Jones KB, Schell BAB, Neville M, Pickens ND (2023) Novice Occupational Therapy Practitioners' Use of Occupation in Practice: A Scoping Review. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*. 37(2), 210-229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07380577.2022.2025513>

“An occupation-centered perspective is a foundational component defining occupational therapy practice. A scoping review was conducted of research studies from 2002 – 2020 describing novice occupational therapy practitioners and occupation. Ten articles met the inclusion criteria. Novices acknowledged that using occupation was a source of professional tension, describing a mismatch between their education and workplace expectations. The cognitive load of occupation-centered practice influenced novices’ avoidance of occupation. Few articles address novices’ experiences using occupation in their practice. Existing research primarily addresses barriers limiting novices’ use of occupation such as lack of supervision and confidence.”

19. Roberts M, Miller M, Wilding C (2022) Growing occupation-centred therapists for the future: Understanding student experiences of learning about occupation and its place in occupational therapy practice. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 69(2), 205-213. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12784>

**Introduction:** Occupational therapy entry-level education is integral to how students obtain deep understanding of occupational therapy's core philosophy of occupation and its place in practice. However, there is a lack of research that explores occupation-centred education from the perspectives of students. Therefore, this study aimed to identify Australian entry-level occupational therapy students' experiences of learning about occupation, and its place in practice.

**Methods:** A qualitative descriptive design was adopted. Overall, 20 students participated in four focus groups lasting between 45 and 75 min. Data were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analysed in two phases, using reflexive thematic analysis.

**Findings:** There were three themes that encapsulated what helped students to better understand occupation and its place in practice: (1) making occupation real; (2) relating occupation to me; and (3) theory as a focussing lens. There was also a range of pedagogical strategies that helped students to better understand occupation: using active and interactive teaching and learning strategies. One additional theme indicated a challenge to helping the students understand occupation and its place practice: when practice education settings were not centred on occupation.

**Conclusion:** Learning about occupation and occupation-centred practice may be facilitated by using practice examples, encouraging students to think about occupation in their own lives, teaching and applying occupation-centred theory, and employing interactive learning and teaching strategies. Student learning in practice settings where occupational therapy is centred on occupation is imperative. Further exploration of students' perspectives of learning about occupation across multiple occupational therapy programmes is warranted.”

20. Taylor J, Mynard L, Farnworth L (2022) Occupational Therapists' Experiences Using the Model of Human Occupation in Forensic Mental Health. *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*. 38(1), 67-85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0164212X.2021.1974325>

“The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) is cited as the predominant theoretical model used by occupational therapists in forensic mental health (FMH). This mixed-methods case study aimed to explore how MOHO is used to improve patient outcomes, and the benefits and challenges experienced in its use. The study also investigated how participants’ education and use of professional development influenced their use of MOHO. MOHO was found to be

beneficial in informing patient-centred practice in FMH. However, forensic occupational therapists must be supported to continue developing their understanding of MOHO to attain the full benefits of its use.”