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Reinforcing occupational performance, engagement, and participation as the core concepts of occupational therapy

Authors

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Abstract

Background. The core concepts of occupational performance, occupational engagement, and occupational participation are unique to the occupational therapy profession. However, their definitions and applications are inconsistently presented across conceptual models of practice and have been challenged within the occupational therapy and occupational science literature. **Objective.** This study aimed to describe the discursive controversies presented within the occupational therapy literature for the inclusion or exclusion of the three core concepts within occupational therapy. **Methods.** A conceptual review of the literature was undertaken to uncover applications and controversies of the three core occupational concepts. Each concept was analysed based on its features, attributes, and characteristics (Podsakoff, 2016) through an anti-oppressive lens. An anti-oppressive lens within occupational therapy focuses on minimizing discourses and practices that exclude or limit certain social groups from achieving occupational equity and rights through autonomous informed decision making about their occupational lives. **Results.** The applications of the three core concepts appeared to be distinct, yet, related, and covered the breadth of occupational outcomes desired across social groups. Removing core concepts would lead to occupational inequities. **Conclusions.** The inclusion of all three concepts as core outcomes of occupation-centred practice ensures the professions focus on occupational equity across diverse social groups.

Biography - Jane Davis

Jane A. Davis is Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, in the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at the University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada. She uses transformative learning and critical pedagogies in her teaching of key foundational occupational therapy concepts, processes, and attitudes. Her educational scholarship centres on concepts of critical reflexivity, uncertainty, abductive reasoning, and dynamic systems theory. Jane is also a doctoral candidate at Western University, London, Ontario, Canada. Jane's research work is focused on supporting engagement and participation of individuals living with psychosis and substance use disorders, as well as measurement of children's occupational repertoire development.

Biography - Daniel Cezar da Cruz

Daniel Cesar Da Cruz is a Senior Lecturer in the MSc (Pre-Registration) and BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Programmes at Leeds Beckett University, in Leeds, United Kingdom. He is interested in conceptual models of practice in occupational therapy, the core concept of occupational engagement, and how occupational science knowledge can inform occupational therapy practice. His doctorate research focused on associations among occupational roles, independence, and assistive technology for people with physical disabilities living in their communities. Prior to moving to the United Kingdom in 2017, Daniel was a lecturer in occupational therapy at the Federal University of Sao Carlos (UFSCar), Brazil.

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