

PERCEPTIONS OF A CLIENT-CENTRED APPROACH AMONG SLOVENIAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

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Introduction: Existing literature acknowledges the contribution of a client-centred approach to the healthcare environment in general. In the occupational therapy field the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance is a model which utilizes this approach. It moves away from the traditional medical model and emphasizes the inclusion of clients in the decision-making process.

Objectives: The aim of the study was to explore how Slovenian occupational therapists experience and perceive the use of a client-centred approach in their current clinical practice.

Methods: A generic qualitative approach was selected and twelve semi-structured interviews were completed to gain a deeper understanding of the use of a client-centred approach in the Slovenian healthcare system. A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data and identify the participants' experiences and perceptions.

Results: The majority of the participants perceived that the use of a client-centred approach was beneficial to the occupational therapy process. They experienced factors which would facilitate the use of this approach and challenges to implementation in their own clinical practice setting. Their experience of the Slovenian healthcare system was that it was still strongly influenced by the medical model. They identified differences in experience of the use of the approach between health and social care. Participants working in community-based occupational therapy services recognized that they had more opportunity to facilitate the use of a client-centred approach. Lack of knowledge was also highlighted as a difficulty.

Conclusion: All the participants expressed a willingness to incorporate a client centred approach in their practice. They all identified the motivation of the individual occupational therapist and their willingness to undertake further education to improve occupational therapy practice as essential.

Contribution to the practice/ evidence base of occupational therapy: The study provided evidence from practice about the use of a client-centred approach. In particular the opportunity provided for the implementation of this approach in community settings. This study will inform and influence the development of this approach in occupational therapy practice in Slovenia.