

Development of a reflection sheet on the meaning of occupations

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Introduction: The assumption of occupational therapy is that people receive positive influences through meaningful occupations. Occupational therapy in Japan has been focusing on meaningful occupations. However, the definition of meaningful occupation is unclear.

Objectives: The utility of the reflection sheet on the meaning of occupations established through a literature review was explored.

Description: The reflection sheet on the meaning of occupations consisted of 8 items. These are 1) comfortable and/or uncomfortable feeling when doing the occupation, 2) occupation as means and/or end, 3) connection to others, time, and/or place, 4) making or breaking habits, 5) categories relating to self such as identity and self expression, 6) positive and/or negative effects on health, 7) categories relating to society such as role and stigma, and 8) activity categories such as work and play. One person used the reflection sheet for her daily occupational experiences as a worker and an inpatient.

Results: There were clear differences between positive and negative occupational experiences. Positive occupations tended to be comfortable, be an end and sometimes a means also, connect to important persons for her, past and/or future, and sometimes a place, making habits, relating to society for example playing roles, and categories in work and/or play. Negative occupations tended to be uncomfortable, be only a means or neither a means nor an end, have no connection to time, habits, and society, and play a particular role in a certain context. Most occupations as an inpatient such as receiving treatment and taking informed consent are negative experiences as a patient role. Although doing crafts in the hospital was comfortable, it had no connection to others, time, places, and society. When she presented the product to someone after craft making, it became more enjoyable, had a connection to persons and future relationship, self expression, playing a social role, and categories in productive work.

Conclusions and contribution to practice: A reflection sheet on the meaning of occupations can be used when therapists discuss how meaningful clients' occupational experiences are. The items of the reflection sheet can be used as a guide to make occupations more meaningful.