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Metaphors as working ingredient in clinical use of the Kawa Model

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ABSTRACT TITLE: Metaphors as working ingredient in clinical use of the Kawa Model

Introduction: The Kawa model has traditionally been presented as a culturally-relevant occupational therapy model, infused with Eastern philosophical perspectives, such as a collective-oriented, interdependent view of human agency and occupation. Further, the Kawa model uses metaphors such as a river to portray humans in relationship to their situation. The present study reflects on the role of metaphors in clinical use of the Kawa model.

Objectives: The objective of this study is to contribute to theory development on human occupation by reflecting on the use of metaphors in occupational therapy practice based on the Kawa model.

Methods: A case study of a woman with acquired brain injury at a residential care unit in Sweden, who received occupational therapy that had been guided by the Kawa model served as empirical material. Data was gathered through informal conversational interviews as well as observations and was analyzed using theoretical resources on metaphors from narrative theory as well as the Kawa model.

Results: Results identified how the metaphors from the Kawa model were used by the women to create images of future possibilities within her everyday occupation.

Conclusion: The metaphorical function of key concepts in the Kawa Model might be a working ingredient in this models ability to contribute to change among clients understanding of problems and possibilities within their everyday occupational engagement.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy: The present study contributes to theory building on emerging occupational therapy models such as the Kawa model.