

Enabling occupation in practice: utilisation of concepts presented in Enabling Occupation II

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Introduction: Enabling Occupation II (EOII) (Townsend & Polatajko, 2007) discussed the epistemological foundation of occupational therapy and proposed a number of conceptual models to facilitate the translation of this philosophical basis to occupational therapy practice. The release of this book provided an opportunity to investigate the impact these concepts could have on the practice of occupational therapists.

Objective: This research investigated the utility of the conceptual frameworks embedded in EOII in the practice of 24 occupational therapists working in Australia.

Method: Together three principal researchers and 24 occupational therapists formed a community of practice and engaged in a collaborative action research to explore how concepts presented in EOII impacted on their practice. These therapists were from different regions of Australia. They worked in diverse practice areas and they had a range of experience from novice to expert practitioners. Data was gathered over a 12-month period through monthly teleconference group discussions, regular email discussions, and two face-to-face meetings.

Findings: Analysis of these discussions revealed that the conceptual framework presented in EO II had relevance to the therapists' practice. Participants talked about "staying true to the occupational roots of the profession" and developed ways of being more person-centred and occupational in their practice. Participants shared and discussed practice stories in which they illustrated the application of the conceptual framework of EOII.

Conclusion: Through the support and challenges inherently involved in participating in this scholarship activity in which participants reflected on and critiqued their practice, participants were able to reinvent and reframe their practice so that it was more occupationally focused.

Contribution to the practice of occupational therapy: This research contributes to the move within the profession to ensure that occupational therapy practice is underpinned by concepts of occupation. This research demonstrates one way in which to assist therapists to be more articulate about and to actively engage in occupation-focused practice. Both the process of and outcomes from this study have the potential to inform the development of praxis in occupational therapy.