

In the Eye of the Beholder: A Comparison of Occupational Performance using the COPM and the KAWA Model

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Introduction: Occupational therapists in community-based settings use various assessments to understand an individual's occupational performance. No assessments are specifically designed to assess the needs of homeless persons. The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure has been used at Bethlehem Haven, a community organization that supports homeless persons regain meaningful lives. The KAWA River Model may elicit a richer picture of occupational performance, but there are no published reports describing its use with homeless populations

Objectives: How does the range of problems identified in the KAWA River Model compare to the range of problems identified using the COPM with the homeless population?

Methods: Exploratory, retrospective study. Data generated from chart records (Kawa Model river images and completed COPMs). One group completed COPM the other KAWA Models. SPSS used to analyze demographic data and define descriptive statistics. COPM data categorized by domain (self-care, productivity, leisure) and descriptive statistics were generated. KAWA data entered verbatim and were analyzed and categorized via the constant comparison method

Results: No significant differences were found between 2 groups. Participants evaluated with the COPM identified an average of 8.98 problems; half of these (50.4%) were categorized as Self Care occupations. Elements of the Kawa model (river walls/floor, rocks, driftwood, etc) provided a structural map to view performance from a person-in-context perspective. Contextual aspects of each element were organized into physical, social, and individual contexts.

Conclusion: The range of occupational problems identified with the two tools was comparable. Both elicited useful views of homeless persons' circumstances of daily occupation and could guide treatment planning. Both also support a person-centered evaluation process.

Contribution to the practice: COPM encourages participants and practitioners to view performance problems through a lens of self-care, productivity and leisure. Practitioners using the Kawa not only identified specific performance problems from the individual's perspective, but also identified aspects of the environment that may support treatment planning that considers these problems in physical and social contexts. Visual representation of occupational performance problems in physical and social context may support both the person's and the practitioner's efforts to see multiple possibilities for interventions.