

How can occupational therapists conceptualise, assess and adapt the person-environment fit in homes?

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Introduction

Occupational therapy models of practice and occupational therapists around the world constantly take into account their clients' environment when providing rehabilitation services. The home environment is of key importance for all individuals and housing is a basic human need. The home environment is thus frequently assessed and adapted by occupational therapists to enhance their clients' performance, safety, satisfaction or quality of life.

Objectives

To present the Model of Competence, a theoretical model that aims to explain the relationship between the person and the environment, as well as its applications in the fields of visual and mental health rehabilitation.

Methods

Analysis of two case studies:

- Impact of familiarity and organisation of home environment as well as changes in home environment on the activities and roles of elders with visual impairments.
- Analysis of residential stability and home preferences for young adults living with psychosis.

Results

The Model of Competence enables home assessment and adaptation. Positive and negative housing situations for different client groups are possible, and the model enables occupational therapy to facilitate the rehabilitation process. A focus on transcultural adaptation of the concepts will be included.

Conclusion

This model is designed for occupational therapists to gain a deeper understanding of the complex issues involved in the assessment and adaptation of the home environment. The issues of social, financial and political elements involved in the choice, design and changes in home environments will also be discussed.

Implications for practice

Occupation therapists will enhance their understanding of the concepts of person-environment relationship, home environment, home adaptation and residential stability through the use of a new theoretical model.