

Trajectories and Experiences of Exclusion - Homeless Population and Occupational Therapy in Brazil.

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Introduction: Poverty as established in our contemporary society affects the life of thousands of people and is increasingly a political issue, research subject or policy-making concern. Often we see groups that live daily vulnerability processes and constant social disruption. Objectives: To present the experience of Social Occupational Therapy with homeless population in Araraquara, Brazil and unveil, from investigative and interventional data, strategies for social inclusion. Description: This study reflects on the experience conducted between the Occupational Therapy Program from the Araraquara University Center, a Municipal Hostel and the Social Inclusion and Citizenship Bureau. In this three-year partnership, it was possible to develop teaching activities for undergraduate students in the apprenticeship practices, research activities and community occupational therapy intervention targeted to the service's users. Results/Discussion: The approximation and integration of students has enabled a theoretical-practical reflection of the role of the occupational therapist in the social field. In addition, the intervention in this field has promoted the development of scientific research, whose object of investigation has permeated the excluded daily life of homeless population. Out of 36 interviewees between May to August, 2008, 21.4% were women and 79.3% men, with ages varying from 18 to 50 years. In regards to the period of being homeless, it varies from some weeks to several years. The occupational therapy activities were always introduced taking into consideration the necessity and desire of the group. These were mediated by the use of activities that allowed non-verbal communication, interpersonal interaction within and encouraging reflection in collective spaces, the subjective aspects. Conclusion: The outcome of this reality associated with the practical intervention of the occupational therapist in the social field has been allowing the enhancement of future professionals and a stimulus that goes beyond the technical aspects, but also political. By approaching the homeless population and promoting a therapeutic intervention, it becomes possible to understand their needs and define strategies to face all daily conflicts. Contribution to the practice: By knowing the homeless population in Brazil through its own social actors helps the occupational therapists to perform their professional role according to human rights and citizenship.