

Occupational Need, developing a concept.

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Introduction Occupational Need is a developing concept which provides understanding of the internal process through which a person identifies changes in his or her occupation throughout the person's occupational history, modifying participation and performance. **Objectives** Discuss and develop the theoretical and conceptual basis of the definition of Occupational Need. **Description** The concept of Occupational Need arose during a research process. The definition used at that time was based on the Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and the Occupational Therapy Framework: Domain and Process; and it included elements of natural, human, social and economic sciences. This definition has three main components: person, context and occupation. The internal process experienced by a person in relation with his or her context and the occupations performed in it, generate the Occupational Needs. The person's internal process considers the perception of occupational gaps that influence the level of satisfaction. The context is related to the level of the person's participation. **Contribution to practice** This topic supports the progress and development of Occupational Science and O.T. practice in the sense that it provides further understanding about the person's development and behavior as an occupational being. The application of the concept contributes to the construction of the client's occupational profile, considering his or her occupational history; to the understanding of a person's needs according to his or her perception when participating in a determined context; to the evaluation of factors that influence performance; and to generate strategies to approach these needs. **Discussion** Participation in occupations generates a feeling of satisfaction. When the person perceives an occupational gap, the occupational performance is altered. The attitude and actions a person will take as a result of this alteration will depend on how the person perceives the occupation and on the degree of importance, satisfaction, performance level and overall value of it. **Conclusion** The process of identifying occupational needs can be a resource to evaluate, plan, execute, evaluate and review an intervention, providing practice guidelines and a therapeutic means of inclusion.