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Embracing and Empowering: The Role of Occupational Therapy in Recovery from Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

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Introduction: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can occur following experiences including armed conflicts, natural disasters, violence, injuries and childhood traumas. Experiences of PTSD are highly personal as is the recovery process, yet PTSD invariably impacts people's lives, occupation and identities. It is evident that PTSD experiences are often interconnected with a profound sense of "injustice", which may impact the severity of the symptoms and speed of recovery. Occupational Therapists, who aspire to promote human well-being through "enabling" occupation, are increasingly providing service to this population.

Objectives: Employing perspectives from theoretical Model of Occupation, this paper; 1) identifies some key dimensions of PTSD that frequently impact occupation engagement, 2) explores OT's unique role in "enabling: occupation, 3) proposes conceptual framework to enhance OT's role in working with this population.

Approach: Using examples driven from the author's experience working with adults living with PTSD due to work-related injuries, and by applying Models of Occupation, the author will outline an approach to intervention that effectively facilitated both resiliency and recovery.

Practice Implications: By adapting and expanding their "enabling" role, and by using insight derived from occupational models, OT can support people living with PTSD to re-engage in the occupation of their daily live, gain resiliency, re-affirm their sense of identity, and achieve recovery.

Conclusion: Supporting the recovery of clients living with PTSD entails embracing clients' experience and empowering clients to achieve their recovery goals using and occupation-based approach that is focused on each client's strength and opportunities.