

1947

From Functional goals to Participation based goals: Do we need a different framework?

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Background: The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) highlights the influence of 'person-task-environment' triad on participation of individuals in preferred occupations and roles in society. Various methods and standardised goal setting instruments incorporate components of the triad in combination or isolation. However, impact on participation is not well captured. Collaboration with service recipients to guide therapy process can help address this.

Objective: This study describes a semi-structured interview method of setting goals including all three dimensions of the triad with families of children experiencing developmental disabilities.

Method: A semi-structured interview, of one-hour duration was conducted with families of children receiving Occupational Therapy services at Ummeed Child Development Center at start of intervention in their preferred language. Stem questions were intended to understand child's participation in everyday routines in different contexts, families' hopes and importance of desired participation. Elements of environment and task supporting/ hindering participation along with body structure and function needed were explored. The agreed upon plan was documented and shared with the families.

Results: The interview structure helped to look at participation rather than focusing on the specific body structure and function and activities. It helped the therapists to step down from expert position and collaborate with families leading to shared accountability and learning. This set precedence for future discussions and applications beyond therapeutic context.

Conclusion: This method of goal setting ties in with core values of OT. It provides a space for collaboration with families adhering to the family centered principles.