



Sexuality and Occupational Therapy

Is it possible to influence clients' intimacy?

Question:

What are the occupations that can be offered by Occupational Therapists?
Are there limits?



Sex?

THEORY NEEDED

SEXOLOGY

- ❖ Anatomy e fisiology
- ❖ Psico~social concepts

How do mind and emotions work?

How does the body work?

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- ❖ ADL
- ❖ Theoretical models

Which occupations?
What meaning?

~ MOHO
~ CMOP
~ MOVI



INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Sexuality = a dynamic human experience,
both biological and emotional
- ❖ Sex = activities that aim to be sexually
satisfactory (definition given by AOTA)

Educazione di Cupido,
Correggio

«*Being ill does really change
you and every little detail does matter.»*»

Int. 3

Aims...



Apollo e Dafne,
J.W. Waterhouse

...the role of OTs
in understanding
the needs for and
issues with
intimacy for our
clients.

«*Here (OT's room) there is a lot of intimacy.
It feels like home. A lot of emotions show up.
Doors and boxes open, because here you have to
get yourself involved.»*

_Int. 3

Method

METHOD

- ❖ Qualitative phenomenological study

PARTICIPANTS

- ❖ 14 adult patients (6 women, 8 men)
- ❖ Inclusion was not pathology-influenced

DATA ANALYSIS

- ❖ Semi-structured interviews
 - ❖ Notes transcription
- ❖ Comparison of data to highlight key aspects and common elements

R esults

Talking about sex with clinicians

	Yes	No
Previous healthcare professionals' interest	3	11
Occupational Therapists' interest	11	3

- ❖ Reasonable question
- ❖ Intervention more complete

- ❖ Privacy
- ❖ Other priorities

Feelings

Kisses, hugs
and caresses

What does *sexuality*
mean to patients?

Feeling
attractive

Sex

Getting dressed

Cooking/planning
a dinner

Dealing with sexuality and personal experiences

There are components and activities
not equally acknowledged, still recurrent.

Flirting/planning
intimate moments

Putting on
make-up

	Yes	No
Sexuality = daily living component	14	~
Sexuality = OT's objective	12	2

Above all, those occupations
seen as more personal
and subjective.

*Being back in the kitchen,
being able to put on make-up [...]
make me feel attractive again.
I see myself as a wife again.
This gave me something [...]
that surely will change my intimacy.»*

From the movie
«*Autism in Love*»



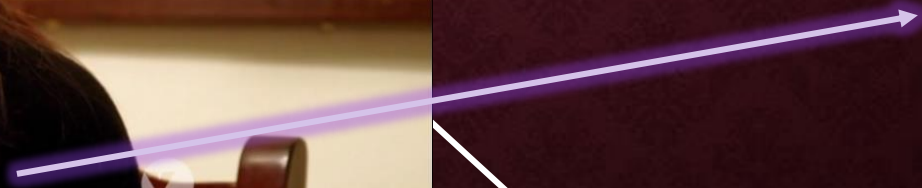
«OCCUPATIONS»



Self-image



Intimacy



C onclusions

- ❖ The majority of the clients do wait for the clinicians to ask questions about their sexual lives.
- ❖ The majority of the clients do recognize the fundamental role that OTs can have in understanding their needs for and issues with.
- ❖ Sexuality and Occupations both influence a person's self-image and function together reciprocally.



Thank you!