



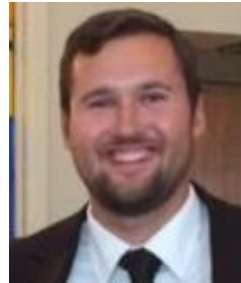
Sponsor perspectives on private refugee sponsorship: A narrative inquiry

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The Research Team

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Occupational Science
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Requirements to Become a Sponsor

Group Requirements:

- × Sufficient number of members
- × Financial & settlement capacity
- × One year commitment
- × “Sensitivity” training



Individual Requirements:

- × Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident
- × 18+ years old
- × Reside in resettlement country (i.e. Canada)
- × No serious criminal convictions



Literature Highlights

- × Refugees have high rates of psychological challenges, isolation, and difficulties with **community engagement** (Beiser, 2009; Lanphier, 2003; Vasilevska, Madan, Simich, 2010)
- × Privately-sponsored refugees tend to **adapt better** during resettlement than government-assisted refugees (Beiser, 2003)
- × Private sponsorship places the sponsor in an inherent position of **power** (Beiser, 2003)
- × **Systemic barriers** to refugee engagement that sponsors are often ill-equipped to navigate (Lanphier, 2009)
- *Little about sponsorship relationship dynamics*

Research Question

- × How do refugees and sponsors experience the private sponsorship relationship?
 - × How do principles of allyship play out within the sponsorship relationship?
 - × How can OT contribute to building effective sponsorship teams?

- × *Part 1: The sponsor perspective*

Conceptual lenses

Critical Occupational Approach

- × Meanings associated with an occupation are transient, are reproduced by social actors, and mutually evolve in tandem with the socio-political context within which the occupation is situated (Njelesani, Gibson, Nixon, Cameron, & Polatajko, 2013). Power relations foregrounded.

Anti-Oppression focus on *allyship*

- × Allyship is the active practice of unlearning and relearning, and is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals or groups (PeerNet BC, 2016)

Methodology

Design:

- Qualitative Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)
 - × Digitally recorded individual 60-90 minute narrative interviews
 - × Use of stories as data

Snowballing Recruitment:

- × sponsored a newcomer for at least one year



Methodology

Analysis:

- Conventional Content Analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)
- Open-ended questions were used (i.e. Can you tell me more about that?)
- Allow codes and themes to emerge from the data
- Relevant theories (e.g., occupation, allyship) are addressed in the discussion

Participant Demographics

General	Female: 3
	Male: 2
Employment	Self-employed: 1
	Employed Full Time: 2
	Retired: 2
OTs	2 of the participants were OTs!
Geography	East Coast: 1
	West Coast: 1
	Ontario: 3
Number of times as a sponsor	Single: 1
	Multiple: 4

Seven Emerging Themes

1. Not being prepared
2. Not just helping with the day-to-day:
Orienting to Canadian life
3. Acknowledging (my) “expertise is limited”
4. **Managing sponsor group dynamics**
5. **Like parent, like sponsor: power role plays**
6. **Countering expectations and limiting stereotypes**

Managing Sponsor Group Dynamics

“There were times when people were taking on a lot more and it was a strain...[the refugees] need all of this support and it seems like our troubles don't matter at all, but like, everyone has family stuff going on...so just being real about our own, um kind of, limitations...”

“You eventually get these situations where these co-sponsors are basically there for the welcome party and the photographs that were taken so they can put them on social media.”

Like Parent, Like Sponsor: Power role plays

“We are almost like expectant parents”

“The process of receiving a list of families, it’s kind of like adoption”

“When you’re a mother, you know, you worry about your family, and it was a bit like that because they were dependent on us for a lot of things”

Countering expectations and limiting stereotypes

“There’s an expectation that they will be, you know, uneducated and very impoverished or traumatized and that’s often, not the case...[the refugee] was living a life like you and me and I think that’s the thing that...impacted me the most.”

“There’s a vulnerability but that’s not an excuse for being patronizing or feeling superior...and I think that that’s something that sponsors don’t get.”

How are principles of allyship illustrated through sponsor narratives?

- listening more, speaking less
- checking expectations for special recognition
- build capacity to receive criticism
- Responding to systemic barriers



How is OT relevant?

- × Support teams to navigate newcomer's disruptions to occupational identities and meanings
- × Occupations as sites for relationship building
- × Enabling team processes and strategies to foster autonomy
 - × Enabling reflexivity
- × Support teams to name and frame sponsorship role.
What does it mean to be a sponsor?
- × Appreciation of impact of trauma, discrimination on mental health

Next Steps

- Obtain insights from the **refugees' perspectives**
- **Compare and contrast** sponsor and refugee analyses
- Further consider how teams consider how systemic issues reproduce oppression



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