

The enabling factors contributing to homeless people's transition into sustained employment: a narrative inquiry

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Outline of Presentation

- Introduction: A brief history of homelessness in SA
- Rationale and Research Question
- Methodology: A Narrative Inquiry
- Findings: Working through Life
- Discussion: An Occupational Transition
- Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations
- Note of Thanks
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A Brief History of Homelessness in SA

A consequence of relocation to 'homelands', forced labour and forced removals.



With people flocking to cities in search of a livelihood despite a lack of adequate infrastructure



A loss of access to livelihoods, community and security



Rationale & Research Question

Problem Statement:

- One of the most marginalised and occupational deprived group of society.
- Identities shaped by **illness**, **substance abuse** and **social exclusion**.

Relevance to Occupational Therapy?

- **Occupation** inherently linked to individual and population **health & wellbeing**
- **Work** can positively influence **mental health**, **social inclusion**, **personal identity**.

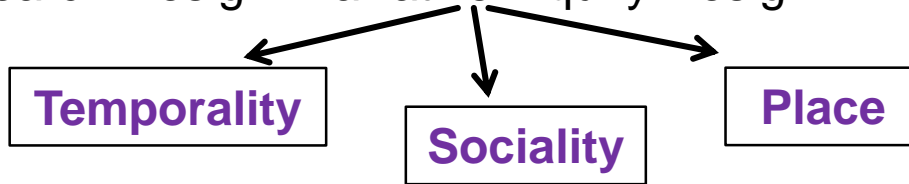
Research Question:

“What are the enabling factors that contribute to homeless people attaining and sustaining open labour market employment for 6 months or more?”

Methodology: A Narrative Inquiry

- Research Site: U-Turn Homeless Ministries
- Inclusion Criteria: 1. Previously homeless, 2. Currently employed, 3. Completion of the U-turn Rehab Programme

- Research Design: Narrative Inquiry Design



- Data Collection: Open-ended, semi-structured Interviews
“How did you get to where you are now?”
- Data Analysis: Thematic Data Analysis

Findings

Working Through Life



Trying to Stay Afloat

“...when I looked at my circumstances and where I’ve come from, those are the aspects that contributed to me doing something about it now.”
(Sarah)

Opportunities for Give and Take

“The best way to beat poverty [is] teach me your skills I’ll teach you mine. We’re good. We’re going forward”
(Matthew)

Building Affirming Relationships

“...they helped me, they gave me the tools ...and they taught me how to look at things more objectively”
(Sarah)

Evolving Identities, Shifting Mindsets

“So you cannot just get out of this banana tree, cut off the branches and then stick in, like apples. You need to like... remove the roots...plant another tree...”
(Matthew)

Facilitators of an Occupational Transition

- Successful occupational transitions require occupational adaption

Reflecting on previous occupational participation to increase readiness for an anticipated transition



Continuity between past and present forms of occupational participation



Institutional and social support systems



Satisfaction with one's new occupational identity following a goodness of occupational fit

Conclusion & Recommendations

- A goodness of occupational fit together with institutional supports can play a role in the facilitating homeless peoples' occupational transition into employment.
- However, more research is needed to inform OT-based interventions.
- Narrative inquiry is a means to unlocking facilitators of this complex transition.
- A critical narrative inquiry approach (Rudman & Aldrich, 2017) is recommended to further examine the socially and politically situated nature of homeless narratives.

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