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'Only Connect'; the art of psychoanalytic playfulness in occupational engagement

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Learning Objective: Playfulness in psychoanalysis is not only the province of the child. Winnicott (1971) stated that as adults we play with words and through activities. This workshop explores the symbolic and relational opportunities of working with objects (i.e. play) in therapy with adults. Through play participants can experience how an exploration of its layered and relational meaning can create transformational occupational identities (i.e. 'being' and 'becoming') by for example drawing on its personal, social and cultural significance.

Description of Teaching Method: The workshop will start with a creative activity inviting the participants to introduce themselves to each other, thus allowing them to reflect upon their identity as a co-constructed concept. Some theory on playfulness and the transitional space (Winnicott 1971, Fidler, 1963, and Cunningham & Gibertoni, 2013) will be introduced and discussed by using a case example before the second activity of making a quilt. The workshop will provide a means to explore difference through the use of materials and dialogue. Using a mixture of 'doing' and discussion the group will create a forum to explore the symbolic meanings of a shared occupation and the accompanying intersection of its personal/social identities. We will consider how occupations can create links with others and/or disrupt uncritical assumptions (i.e. cultural hegemonies). The use of psychoanalytic thinking in occupational therapy can reveal unconscious bias in groups and can deepen an understanding of occupational injustice within our clinical work.