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Everyday occupation as a therapeutic means for persons with severe mental disorders who live in the community - reconstruction of events told by occupational therapists using George Herbert Mead's theory of actions

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Individuals with severe mental disorders fail frequently to perform daily activities because of great difficulties to carry out the social process in human actions. This means difficulties to find new solutions of how to perform actions in daily life and to constantly adapt to the environment. This study aims to clarify actions in everyday occupation used as a therapeutic means.

Fifty events were selected from five interviews with four occupational therapists about the social process of everyday occupation as a means for treatment. Through interpretative abductive analyses the events were reconstructed and given new theoretical understanding using George Herbert Mead's theory of the social act. The result shows that occupational therapists use everyday occupation as a therapeutic means by letting people with difficulties practice the social process. This is both in relation to objects and social relations. By taking the role of others, new ideas are given to try. The therapist adjusts the activity to find the level at which the person can participate with his / her own experience in the implementation of the everyday action. When a person communicates with significant gestures and is able to take the attitude of the others, a development of thoughts, feelings and gestures takes place. This means development of the self and the mind. Using George Herbert Mead's theory for reconstruction of events is a way to gain deeper understanding of the social process in human actions in occupational therapy and mental health rehabilitation.