

## The use of 'occupation as a means' within occupational therapy community development practice settings

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**Introduction:** There has been some progress towards understanding practice approaches that occupational therapists currently use in community development settings (CDS) but many aspects of these approaches have not been explored. We present a study that explored how occupational therapists working in CDS use occupation as a means within their interventions.

**Objectives:** To identify and describe the ways in which occupational therapists working in CDS have used occupations in their interventions and; to identify the factors that have influenced their use of occupation as a means.

**Method:** A qualitative descriptive study design was used, employing a narrative approach, to generate the intervention stories of four occupational therapists. Data collection occurred in South Africa, a context where complex social realities must be engaged with. An inductive thematic analysis produced a single theme, comprising three categories.

**Findings:** "Using occupation as a process of doing with, that creates a way for a process to happen" described the complex way in which occupation was interwoven into interventions that were focused on collective doing in context. The crafting of the process is described by the categories: 1) the use of occupation as subjectively defined and used within programmes, 2) participatory approaches to facilitate the doing community and 3) delimiting contextual factors shaping the use of occupation.

**Conclusion:** These findings broaden the way we might use occupation as a means beyond its usual location within clinical interventions and makes a contribution to the theoretical knowledge base available to further develop community development practice frameworks.