Re-imagining occupational therapy clients as communities: Presenting the Community-Centred Practice Framework

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World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congress, Cape Town, South Africa, May 2018
Imagine this…

You are an occupational therapist working in a community-based substance misuse service.

You see a caseload of up to 30 adolescents who present with similar substance misuse issues and health risks and harms.

Seeing the pattern of issues within the community, you realise that a proportion of the problems experienced by young people are caused by community-level social, cultural, political, economic and environmental determinants.

You decide to partner with local young people, schools, sports clubs, businesses and organisations to explore and assess community-level issues and barriers, and to develop community-level occupational goals and strategies for intervention that can be implemented in collaboration with them.

This is community-centred practice.

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Methods

Qualitative case study methodology (Stake, 1995)

1. Canadian community food security network
   - Key informant interviews N= 6
   - Document analysis, social media analysis, field observations

2. Australian rural community banking initiative
   - Key informant interviews N= 5
   - Document analysis, webpage analysis, field observations
1 **Community Identity**
   - Who is the community client?
   - Social actors and social field (people, groups, organisations, networks)
   - Place and/or setting

2 **Community Occupations**
   - What occupations are important?
   - What is the occupational goal?
   - Co-occupation
   - Diverse roles, skills, values, experiences, and expertise

3 **Community Resources and Barriers**
   - What resources exist?
   - How can resources be used to overcome barriers?
   - Economic/Non-economic
   - Power redistribution

4 **Participation Enablement**
   - What processes are used for community participation
   - What is the occupational therapists’ enablement role?
   - Enabling strategies
1. Community Identity

The first component occupational therapists to question:

• Who is the community client?

To understand community identity, which is defined by social actors and social field, and place and setting.
2. Community Occupations

The second component encourages occupational therapists to question:

- What occupations are important to the community?
- What joint action is taken by community members towards their shared goal?

Theories of **co-occupation** and **community heterogeneity** are used to conceptualise community-level occupations.
3. Community Resources and Barriers

In the third component occupational therapists are encouraged to question:

• What resources are needed by the community?

• What barriers prevent participation?

It is important to audit resources with both economic and non-economic value. This is used to support a process of power redistribution.
4. Participation Enablement

In the fourth component the questions to be asked include:

• What processes are used for community participation?

• What is the occupational therapists enablement role?

This process will enable occupation therapists to select and utilise enabling strategies with the community to achieve their occupational goal.
Implications for practice and research

• The proposed conceptual framework can improve understanding of community as clients and utilisation of a community-centred practice approach

• Further research is needed to trial and evaluate the CCPF across the wide range of socially and culturally diverse community contexts where occupational therapists currently and/or could potentially work


Thank you

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