Occupational Therapy and Transgender Populations: Perspectives and Recommendations

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Objectives

- Recognize the unique occupational needs and perspectives of the transgender population
- Become familiar with transgender related terminology
- Gain perspectives of practicing OTs
- Identify ways to provide quality care
Gender identity
A person’s intrinsic sense of being male, female, or an alternative gender.

Gender role or expression
Characteristics in personality, behavior, and appearance
Determined by society’s standards

Gender dysphoria
Describes as the distress caused by the discrepancy between a person’s gender identity and the person’s sex assigned at birth.

(Coleman et. al, 2012)
Background: Terminology

Transgender
People whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth

Gender Non-conforming
People whose gender identity or expression is different than the social norm

Cisgender
People who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth

(Coleman et. al, 2012)
Background: Terminology

Trans Woman

Male $\rightarrow$ female
Caitlyn Jenner

Trans Man

Female $\rightarrow$ male
Chaz Bono

Gender Queer

Cannot identify to a specific gender
Miley Cyrus
Everything is on a spectrum

**SEX**
- Male
- Intersex
- Female

**GENDER IDENTITY**
- Man/Boy
- Transgender/Genderqueer
- Two-spirited/etc.
- Woman/girl

**GENDER EXPRESSION**
- Masculine
- Androgynous
- Feminine

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**
- Attracted to women
- Attracted to all/both/none
- Attracted to men
Gender and sexuality are **DIFFERENT**

- **Sexuality**=multidimensional
  - includes things that direct sexual and romantic relationships
    - Desire, attraction, and behavior

- Transgender sexuality often falls **OUTSIDE** of traditional research framework (Galupo, 2017)
  - suggests that a **new framework be developed**

Sexuality and preference is **COMPLEX** and varies for each person

https://gendertrender.wordpress.com/2013/08/05/what-separates-the-t-from-the-lg/
Purpose of study

Exploring the occupational needs of the transgender population and occupational therapist’s needs for providing services.
Research questions

What are the occupational needs and perspectives of individuals who identify as transgender?

What are the needs and perspectives of OT practitioners in providing care to individuals who identify as transgender?

How do the needs and perspectives compare?

What are suggestions and recommendations from the transgender and the OT focus groups for providing care to the transgender population?
Methodology

- Qualitative
- 2 Focus Groups: digitally recorded
  - Transgender group (Transwomen)
  - OT group
- Purposeful Sample
- Transcribed recordings
- Coded into themes
Results: Occupational needs of individuals who identify as transgender

- Becoming the identified gender: roles, relationships, make up, hygiene, toileting, dressing, safe sex

- Community integration: acceptance of identified gender, coping, bathroom access, employment, social participation, healthcare, gender markers and legal matters
Results: **Perspectives** of individuals who identify as transgender

“Victoria’s Secret is a whole new world”

- Assistance with ADL transitions related to grooming, hygiene, gestures, walking, dressing, shopping for lingerie, speaking
- Personhood: becoming the new me
- Coping
- Safe sex
- Employment & education opportunities
- Sensitivity training of others (community places, employers)
Results: **Needs** and perspectives of OT practitioners in providing care to individuals who identify as transgender

**Knowledge and understanding**

- Vocabulary, Transition Process, Unique ADLS of Tucking, Bonding, Gaff use, Processes for gender marker changes
- Dealing with hospital policy and gender specific situations
- Identifying and locating supportive resources
Results: Perspectives of OT practitioners in providing care to individuals who identify as transgender?

- **OT Process is a Good Match**: Client-centered, Occupation-based, Dignity, Respect, Psychosocial and Emotional Support, Advocacy
- Limited knowledge and Exposure
- **Increase training** & sensitivity
- Policy challenges (social, facility)
- Prevalence increasing: “Younger therapists will be aware and more prepared”
Results: Suggestions and Recommendations

Use the proper pronouns! of the person’s identified gender

- Be respectful
- Ask relevant questions
- Be knowledgeable
- Be supportive
- Be accepting
- Give guidance
- Be holistic

- Advocate for dignity
- Increase educational opportunities for OTs and other HCPs
- Employability importance and choices
- Promote safe sex practices for transgender population
Limitations

- Small group
  - 2 trans individuals
  - 3 OTs
- Localized group
  - Tampa Bay area
- Trans women only
  - No trans men’s perspectives
- Participants known to researchers
  - Potential bias
Recommendations: Implications for Practice

- Stay current
- **Increase knowledge and understanding**
- More Research
- **Function as consulting/ advocating roles**
  - Provide resources, programming, and referral to needed services
  - Community advocate
  - Promote occupational justice
  - Prevent occupational deprivation and barriers
  - Promote health and wellness
THANK YOU!

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Questions & Answers

Thoughts & Comments
References


