Spirituality in the Occupational Therapy Community Fieldwork Process: A qualitative study in the South African context

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Supported by the National Research Foundation (NRF) South Africa
Overview

• Introduction
• Methodology
• Findings and discussion
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• Conclusion
Introduction

• Spirituality resides in persons, is shaped by the environment and gives meaning to occupation (Duncan, 2011) and
• Community development brings social change, shapes relationships and collective empowerment (Murray, 2013)
• The connection between spirituality and community development seems to promote social justice that facilitates radical transformation of community structures (Chile & Simpson, 2010)
• Very little research about the importance of spirituality in communities in the South African context

Methodology

Worldview: Interpretivism

Approach: Qualitative Research, Exploratory-Descriptive Design

Participants Selection: Data Collection, Data Analysis
Findings and Discussion

Students’ exposure to spirituality in community settings
- Exposure in communities
- Improvement of students’ self-awareness
- “Journaling” facilitated students reflections

Community development strategies
- “Community entry helps”
- Assets-Based Community Development (ABCD)
- Empowerment strategy

Perceived enablers of spiritual occupations
- Supportive environment
- Motivation from occupation
- Community project
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<th>Themes Two</th>
<th>Categories</th>
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<td>Community development strategies</td>
<td>• “Community entry helps”</td>
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“Community entry helped me; while in the community, you need to make friends, you also need to become part of the people in order to experience what they do on a daily basis and be one of the community members. It [Community entry] also makes you aware of different facets that you personally didn’t previously engage in with your spirituality. Community development assisted me to engage in their spirituality so that I can motivate them to develop and carry on as part of their internal motivation to further develop within the community.” (Fourth-year student 5)

“The community fieldwork process actually brought it [Spirituality] as it makes them [Community members] feel empowered. The empowerment strategy promoted community members’ willingness and acceptance to do anything that was related to their spiritual aspect, and they also felt that spirituality played an important role in the community.” (Fourth-year student 6)

“Spirituality creates supportive environments within the community, particularly if they [Community members] share the same religion, and they have a sense of connectedness amongst each other. If they [Community members] engage in spiritual activities, it [Spirituality] motivates and enables them to actually engage in those activities that promote their health in the community.” (Fourth-year student 7)

“In occupation-based practice, we use spirituality as a means to motivate people to engage in their occupations as a part of their occupation-based practice. They [Community members] were practising their religion and faith as they were singing hymns and praying, and I also engaged in their spiritual activities, and I felt: wow this is a good way to keep oneself motivated!” (Fourth-year student 5)

Thus, the current findings provide impetus for students and educators to be more spiritual sensitive to their own and others’ needs while engaging in social contract with communities.
Thank You

For more information about the study

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