The Injustices of Forced Displacement: How Occupational Therapy is Uniquely Suited to Promote Healing

Jennifer Crandall, OTD, OTR/L

Objectives

• Describe how the turmoil of forced displacement can impact healthy occupational engagement in various contexts
• Discuss how occupational therapists are uniquely suited to address the occupational challenges experienced by people who have survived displacement
Forced Displacement

The US Context

• Resettlement administered by NGOs who are authorized by the federal government
• Emphasis on early employment
• Partnership with community groups and down-stream organizations is essential
• Many arrive and flounder in absence of community mentorship
Life Skills

- Basic money management
- Key words on labels
- Spatial awareness
- Structure
Health and Safety

Learning the community
Creativity

Lessons Learned

- People who have survived forced displacement are in our communities
- Can be seen in any practice setting
- Recognize occupational challenges unique to this population
- Need for community-based OT
- Need to address structural barriers to occupation
“Feel the fear and do it anyway”

- Smith, 2005

Thank You