Occupational Transition in the Process of Becoming Housed Following Chronic Homelessness

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Gaps in Existing Literature

• Only 2 prior studies focused on occupational transition:
  • Heuchemer & Josephsson (2006)
  • Raphael-Greenfield & Gutman (2015)
• Few focused on the chronically homeless population
• A small urban or rural context is neglected
Research Question:
What is the experience of occupational transition of chronically homeless persons during the process of being housed?
Procedure

- Semi-structured interviews over 1-2 sessions
  - 39m-3h 35m
- Recorded & Transcribed
- Managed using NVivo 10

(QSR International, 2012)
## Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>• Acquiring a sense of each transcript</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>• Extracting Significant Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>• Formulation of Meanings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>• Organizing formulated meanings into clusters of themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>• Exhaustively describing the investigated phenomenon</td>
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<td>Step 7</td>
<td>• Describing the Fundamental Structure of the Phenomenon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>• Returning to the Participant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Colaizzi, 1978)
Trustworthiness

*Criteria established by Lincoln & Guba (1985)

**Credibility:**
- Prolonged Engagement
- Peer Debriefing
- Negative Case Analysis
- Member Checking

**Transferability:**
- Rich, Thick Description

**Dependability:**
- Methods Described in Detail to Promote Reproducibility

**Confirmability:**
- Confirmability Audit
- Audit Trail
- Reflexivity
## Health Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Reported Health (n=11)</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Illness</strong></td>
<td>9 (81.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Anxiety n=7; Bi Polar n=5; Depression n=5)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Substance Use</strong></td>
<td>7 (63.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Severe (daily use) n=3; Moderate (&lt;1/day; &gt;1/week) n=1; Mild (&lt;1/week) n=2; In Recovery n=1]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Health</strong></td>
<td>8 (72.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chronic Pain n=4; MSK n=4; Cardiac n=3; Cog/Neuro n=4; TBI n=2; Diabetes n=1)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Phase III Results

• 6 themes/11 sub-themes emerged

- Coping with the Quiet
- Negotiating Substance Use
- Resuming Familiar Occupations
- Occupations to Give Back
- Occupation as Social Inclusion
- Meaning of Spiritual Occupations
Phase III Results

• 6 themes/11 subthemes emerged

Coping with the Quiet
Negotiating Substance Use
Resuming Familiar Occupations
Occupations to Give Back
Occupation as Social Inclusion
Meaning of Spiritual Occupations

“I realized that...I was heading downtown with bolt cutters in my backpack...and going down to steal bicycles just because I was bored...I was isolating, and drinking...There wasn’t that stimuli....of the insanity of my old world. Everything was kind of like, normal now...” [Michael]
Phase III Results

- 6 themes/11 sub-themes emerged

Coping with the Quiet

Negotiating

Substance Use

Resuming Familiar Occupations

Occupation to Give Back

Occupation as Social Inclusion

Meaning of Spiritual Occupations

“The pastor, he saw me sitting in the back of the church by myself and came up to me and said “[Luke], why don’t you come sit up front here with me and my family and sit with us every day? You don’t need to be sitting back here by yourself! . . . there’s more light up front. To someone who came from homelessness, that was worth more than anything, because of the aloneness and isolation you feel and your self-worth and self-esteem. And if you’ve ever had those issues before you became homeless, it’s an exponential problem! So that just allowed me to gain strength. Slowly, by listening and reading, I started participating in more meaningful activities at the church.” [Luke]
Occupational transition in the process of becoming housed following chronic homelessness

La transition occupationnelle liée au processus d'obtention d'un logement à la suite d'une itinérance chronique

Carrie Anne Marshall®, Rosemary Lysaght, and Terry Krupa

Key words: Health; Homeless persons; Human activities; Occupational behaviour; Poverty.

Mots clés : Activités humaines; Comportement occupationnel; Pauvreté; Personnes itinérantes; Santé.

Abstract

Background. Studying the occupations of formerly homeless persons as they transition to becoming housed following long-term homelessness has the potential to offer a meaningful contribution to the ongoing dialogue on homelessness. Purpose. Occupational transition was explored with a sample of persons with a history of chronic homelessness to contribute an occupational perspective to current scholarship on homelessness and to inform the practice of occupational therapists who support this population. Method. Interpretive phenomenology guided the study. Eleven persons with a history of chronic homelessness were engaged in semistructured interviews 3 to 24 months after becoming housed. Findings. Six themes emerged that highlighted occupation as a means of promoting social and psychological integration, and the meaning and experience of occupational transition. Implications. A more comprehensive support strategy acknowledging the occupations of chronically homeless persons is essential to incorporate into future research and practice aimed at promoting community reintegration.®
Implications

1. Supports the relevance of an occupational lens on the issue of homelessness
2. Highlights the prominence of boredom in the experience of recently housed persons
3. Emphasizes the role of the environment in determining the occupations of homeless persons in the transition to being housed
Questions?
Contact: carrie.marshall@queensu.ca
References

• Colaizzi, P. F. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it.
• QSR International (2012). NVivo qualitative data analysis software (v.10).