

Summer 8-14-2020

## Occupation-Based Programming for Survivors of Human Trafficking

Breann H. Paul

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, b.paul@usa.edu*

Becki Cohill

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, bcohill@usa.edu*

Susan MacDermott

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, skmacdermott@gmail.com*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonessummer2020>



Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#), and the [Psychiatry and Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Paul, B. H., Cohill, B., & MacDermott, S. (2020, August 14). Occupation-Based Programming for Survivors of Human Trafficking. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonessummer2020/5>

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the OTD Capstone Symposia at SOAR @ USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, Summer 2020 by an authorized administrator of SOAR @ USA. For more information, please contact [soar@usa.edu](mailto:soar@usa.edu), [erobinson@usa.edu](mailto:erobinson@usa.edu).

# Occupation-Based Programming for Survivors of Human Trafficking

Breann Paul; Becki Cohill, OTD, OTR/L; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

## BACKGROUND

Human trafficking (HT) is the second largest and fastest growing criminal industry in the world today. It involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain a labor or commercial sex act (Freedom United, n.d.). There is currently limited research on the unique needs of survivors of HT who are mothers. The severe trauma that survivors experience can have detrimental consequences on the health and safety of the mother and her child. According to Collins & Skaparis (2020), increased likelihood of mental health problems, violence, stress and a variety of complex social factors, put women at an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes. There is a need for maternity specific resources for women who have been trafficked. Occupation-based activities are imperative to this population as a result of the trauma they experience.

## PURPOSE

To assess the occupational needs of mothers who are survivors of human trafficking and develop occupation-based programming for this population.

## THEORY

Trauma-Informed Care

Psycho-social

Survivor Centered

Occupation Based

Person Environment Occupation

## METHODS & RESULTS

A needs assessment was conducted utilizing descriptive qualitative methods, a phenomenological method. Data collection consisted of unstructured techniques. Currently pregnant or previously pregnant women participated in the semi-structured interviews. A triangulated design was utilized consisting of semi-structured interviews, clinical observations, and a reflective journal. Themes were transcribed into codes through an inductive thematic content analysis. Due to the pandemic causing a delayed start date, the student was not able to see the complete results of the program development.

Occupational Needs		
Infant/Child Development	Sleep	Maternal Role & Responsibilities
Self-Concept	Time-Management	Breastfeeding Support
Infant-Attachment & Adaptation	Community Mobility	Advocating for child's Needs
Maternal Mental Health	Meal Preparation	Meaningful activity engagement to improve emotional health
Child-rearing skills	Healthy Habits/Routines	Opportunities for Skill-Building
Financial Management	Employment Seeking/Pursuits	Healthy Relationships/Social Boundaries
Access to Local Resources	Safety and Emergency Maintenance	Self-Advocacy

## IMPLICATIONS FOR OT

It is not possible for professionals and service providers to alter the traumatic experiences that survivors bring into motherhood; however, it is possible to be aware and responsive to the traumatic stress that many survivors face in the perinatal period. Occupational therapists have the ability to provide survivors the resources and occupation-based skills as they transition into motherhood and interventions to address occupational performance issues for women during the perinatal period.

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### TOOLKIT FOR TRANSITIONING TO MATERNAL ROLE & PERINATAL HEALTH

Topics	Examples
Newborn Care and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe handling and swaddling of an infant</li> <li>Bathing and feeding an infant</li> <li>Room-sharing and bed-sharing</li> <li>Soothing an infant</li> </ul>
Stress Management and Coping Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders</li> <li>Exploration of occupations to manage stress</li> <li>Deep Breathing</li> <li>Visual imagery/Mindfulness meditation</li> </ul>
Healthy Self-Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical self-care</li> <li>Mental/emotional self-care</li> <li>Social self-care</li> <li>Spiritual self-care</li> </ul>
Body Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Body image after giving birth</li> <li>Physiological changes</li> <li>Postpartum bodies</li> <li>Breastfeeding</li> </ul>
Developmental Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gross and fine motor</li> <li>Cognitive</li> <li>Social/emotional</li> <li>Feeding milestones</li> <li>Attachment milestones</li> </ul>
Sleep and Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy sleeping patterns</li> <li>Development of habits and routines</li> <li>Sleep environment</li> <li>Sensory strategies</li> </ul>

Please access QR code for complete references.

