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The Role of Occupational Therapy with the Homeless Population: A Scoping Review

Shelby Osborne  
*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, s.osborne@usa.edu*

Steven M. Gerardi  
*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, sgerardi@usa.edu*

Gina Benevente  
*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, gbenevente@usa.edu*

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The Role of Occupational Therapy with the Homeless Population: A Scoping Review

Shelby Osborne; Steven M. Gerardi, PhD, OTD, MSS, OTR; Gina Benavente, DHSc, MPH, OTR

BACKGROUND

Individuals experiencing homelessness (IEH) lack education; health resources; stress management; social, independent, vocational, and leisure skills (Muñoz et al., 2005). Because homelessness adversely impacts occupation, it is of concern to the occupational therapy (OT) profession. A variety of roles of OT with the homeless population were identified and ill-defined. Given this variety of potential roles, there was a lack of available research that clearly defined the role of OT with the homeless population.

PROBLEM

The role of OT with the homeless population has not been clearly defined or systematically reviewed in the literature. This leaves OT practitioners who would like to serve this population unsure of how to best address their needs.

PURPOSE

To conduct a scoping review of the literature to define the role of OT with the homeless population.

RESULTS

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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| Screen | • ACLS-5  
• MoCA | Cognitive screening to identify problems and develop plans of care (Synovec, 2018). |
| Evaluate | • Initial  
• Functional | Initial evaluations to analyze IEH’s skills and goals (Synovec et al., 2020). Functional evaluations analyze IEH’s routines, potential problem areas and barriers, self-perception, and skills (Synovec, 2020). |
| Assess | • Occupational profile  
• Functional assessment  
• Needs assessment  
• Home safety assessment  
• Environmental assessment  
• Social Skills  
• COPM  
• OSA  
• ACS-AIP  
• Interest Checklist | No one assessment tool grasps the nature and context homelessness has on IEH (Sparbanie, 2020). Ensure tools are culturally relevant (Synovec, 2020). Combining assessment tools with screenings allows OT practitioners to understand IEH’s pre-existing skills and experiences to tailor interventions (Synovec, 2018). |

IMPLICATIONS FOR OT PRACTICE

The role of OT with the homeless population is to assess barriers, implement interventions that enhance the skills needed to independently engage in occupations, and advocate for inclusive services that involve the non-sanctioned occupations that are specific to this population.