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Ashley Ellsworth

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, a.ellsworth@usa.edu

Susan MacDermott

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

Becki Cohill

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

Karen Park

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

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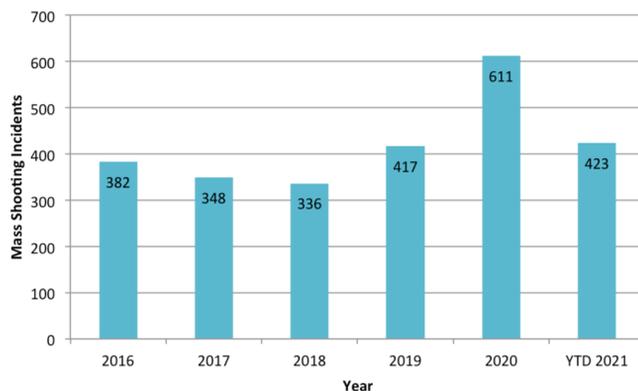
The Occupational Impact of Mass Shootings

Ashley Ellsworth, OTS; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L; Becki Cohill, OTD, OTR/L; Karen Park, OTD, OTR/L

BACKGROUND

Mass shootings continue to persist in the United States. Due to their violent, often unexpected nature, mass shootings can be physically and mentally traumatizing events.

Yearly Mass Shooting Incidents*



Mass shooting: as an event of any affiliation (i.e. including drug or gang related) that results in four or more casualties, not including the shooter, that occurs in any public or private location (Booty et al., 2019).

Though the effects of mass shootings have been researched in depth (Cowan et al., 2020), there is no found research on the occupational impact that these events can have on their victims. The fourth edition of the OTPF newly recognizes human-caused events as an environmental factor that can “result in the disruption of day-to-day life” (AOTA, 2020, p. 36). Human-caused, or “human-made”, disasters, such as mass shootings, are believed to have more detrimental effects than natural disasters (Wilson, 2015).

Occupational therapy does not have a clearly identified role in working with this population, despite many of their presumed needs falling within the occupational therapy scope of practice. With an increasing number of victims secondary to the increase in mass shooting events, occupational therapists need to develop a better understanding of the occupational needs of this population.

What is the Occupational Impact of Mass Shootings on Exposed Individuals in the United States?



Loss of Occupations or Independence

I can't type, I can't put a bra on, I can't cut a steak, I can't drive, I can't do laundry, I can't wrap a present, I can't put my shoes and socks on, I can't do much walking or standing or sitting. I need help with everything. (P. #)



Reclaiming and "Relearning" Lost Occupations

I had to, kinda relearn how to walk and use my leg muscles and stuff. (P. # 169)



Adopting New Occupations

I definitely did become a nurse because of [event]. (P. # 274)



Occupational Participation as a Coping Mechanism

I would say that for a lot of us, this activism was a coping mechanism, and you know, it's what drove us to get out of bed every day--the fact that we were going to be "doing good" on the behalf of others. (P. #124)



Contexts and Environments Facilitate or Inhibit Occupational Participation

I love being a student. And that's something I've kind of rekindled my love for since I moved away from [town], because I actually am able to learn where I am now. (P. #232)



Emergence of New Performance Patterns

I don't go to the movies. When we go out, I know where the exits are. I sit with my back to the wall. Sometimes it's easier to just not deal with it and stay home. (P. #310)



Change of Relationship Dynamics

She found the most help from people who have been there, the survivors of other mass shootings, all members of a club no one willingly joins, but its membership continues to grow. (P. #)



Shift in Life Narratives

I'm not no victim, I'm a survivor. That's what I'm going with. I'm a survivor. (P. #323)

PURPOSE

To determine whether victims of mass shootings experience changes in occupational participation, performance, and fulfillment of meaningful performance patterns after the incident.

METHODS

This qualitative research study employed unobtrusive methods of data collection.

Unobtrusive methods: data collection that lacks direct involvement of research participants and obtains information from various sources (Carpenter & Suto, 2008).

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

- ✓ Publicly accessible written or audiovisual records
- ✓ Published by various sources between 2016 and April 2021
- ✓ Containing stories from victims of mass shootings in the United States

Each record was coded according to the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework* (AOTA, 2020) using deductive reasoning. Codes were analyzed for thematic elements representing similar impacts experienced across the sampled population. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach.

CONCLUSION

Victims of mass shootings in the United States experience changes in the occupational performance, participation, and fulfillment of meaningful performance patterns, including roles, routines, habits, and rituals. Increasing practitioner awareness of the occupation-based changes victims of mass shootings may experience can ensure their receipt of appropriate care. This study increases the body of knowledge of the occupational impact victims of mass shootings experience and contributes to the need for future research on occupational therapy practitioners' role in working with this population.

SCAN FOR REFERENCES:



RESULTS

Of the 227 written and audiovisual records that were collected and analyzed, 88 were coded using Dedoose. These records contained stories from over 220 victims of 35 mass shooting events.



Code Alignment with the OTPF:

- All performance patterns and broader occupational categories were addressed by at least one participant
- 10 areas of occupation were not mentioned

DISCUSSION

- Results reinforce Cacciatore & Kurker's (2020) and Schildkraut et al.'s (2020) direct research with victims of the Sandy Hook and Columbine school shootings
- Limitations of using unobtrusive methods
- Victims of mass shootings may benefit from occupational therapy services based in education, intervention, or advocacy