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Occupational Therapy & Black Women's Hair: An Educational Course

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Occupational Therapy & Black Women's Hair: An Educational Course

Rajaé Jones; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

BACKGROUND

Styling one's hair is an important occupation as a part of a beauty routine, yet there is a limited amount of occupational therapy-based literature that focuses on the occupation of hairstyling, or on the connection between hairstyling and occupational identity. Hairstyling specifically within the Black community plays a major role in one's occupational identity. While hair care practice is a typically common activity, it carries "critical identity-related meanings" among Black women (Ndichu & Upadhyaya, 2019). Adding to the gap on hairstyling, there is no occupational therapy-based literature on the subject focused on the population of Black women.

PROBLEM

Occupational Therapists (OTs) are currently lacking knowledge regarding the cultural importance of hairstyling within different communities and the impact on occupational identity.

PURPOSE

To develop an educational program for OTs on the cultural importance of hairstyling for women within the Black community and the effects it plays on their occupational identity and ultimately occupational performance throughout their different life stages.

METHODS

Theoretical Framework:

- Adult Learning Theory

Occupational Science Concepts:

- Form, Function, and Meaning

Process:

Phase 1: Survey Distribution

- A Microsoft Form with a completion time of <15 minutes.

Phase 2: Program Development

Phase 3: Pilot Test

- 6 attendees
- Presented through Microsoft Teams (webinar).

Phase 4: Program Evaluation

- 100% rated Excellent - "improved knowledge of historical context"
- ~83% rated Good - "more confident in knowledge of tools/products"

RESULTS

Original research was conducted to answer the question: What is the current knowledge, attitudes, and application of haircare (grooming & styling) as an intervention in occupational therapy. The study consisted of 60 participants.

92% believe that haircare is an important intervention.

I feel that I am knowledgeable on the needs of Black women's hair.



85% stated they would want education on haircare interventions for Black women.

RESULTS: PROGRAM



TODAY'S TOPICS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify connection between occupational identity and haircare (grooming & styling).
- Recognize context associated with this occupation.
- Discuss & compare differences in hair routines.
- Identify hair product/tools and their purposes.
- Integrate culturally responsive care into practice.



TODAY'S TOPICS

WHAT WE'LL DISCUSS

- Occupational Identity
- Context
- Attitudes
- Hair Versatility
- Services, Systems & Policies
- Support & Relationships
- Products & Technology
- Case Studies



ATTITUDES

Observable evidence of customs, practices, ideologies, values, norms, factual beliefs, and religious beliefs held by people other than the client (American Occupational Therapy [AOTA], 2020).



SUPPORT & RELATIONSHIPS

People or animals that provide practical physical or emotional support, nurturing, protection, assistance, and relationships to other persons in the home, workplace, or school or at play or in other aspects of their daily activities (AOTA, 2020).



SERVICES, SYSTEMS, & POLICIES

Benefits, structured programs, and regulations for operations, provided by institutions in various sectors of society, designed to meet the needs of persons, groups, and populations (AOTA, 2020).



PRODUCTS & TECHNOLOGY

Natural or human-made products or systems of products, equipment, and technology that are gathered, created, produced, or manufactured (AOTA, 2020).

DISCUSSION

Strengths of the Project:

- Offers interactive activities and discussions.
- ~66% (Excellent)/~33% (Good) - "the activities were relevant to objectives"
- Openly welcomed topic to discuss.
- ~83% rated Excellent - "overall satisfied needs for better understanding of the occupation of haircare for Black women"

Limitations of the Project:

- Limited participation due to COVID-19.
- Currently no occupational therapy or occupational science literature.

Next Steps:

- Present at 2022 OTAC Annual Conference.
- Make an AOTA approved CEU course.

References:

