

Carr, Rebecca and Cole, Fiona (2017) An evaluation of a role emerging placement in a mental health horticultural community. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 80 (S8). p. 9.

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Keywords

Children and families, Mental health, Occupational therapy

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Author Biographies

Sarah qualified as an occupational therapist in 1986, completed a psychodynamic counselling training in 1998, attained a MA in Psychoanalytic studies in 2010, PGCHE in 2012 and became senior fellow of HEA in 2016. She has worked in a variety of mental health settings and has a particular interest in therapeutic relationships, group work and perinatal mental health. She currently works as an occupational therapist in a parental mental health team in Southwark, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and as a senior lecturer at London South Bank University

Sarah was a service user of the parental mental health team. She is a married mother of 2 children, aged 4 years and 10 months. Occupation: freelance retail development consultant. She was referred to the team after experiencing low mood and high levels of anxiety following the birth of her first child. She has a previous history of obsessive compulsive disorder, successfully treated using cognitive behavior therapy. Sarah found the postnatal group immensely helpful and supportive in coping with the change of role in becoming a mother and meeting other women in a similar position to share experiences.

Session S12.1 (FP)

An Evaluation of a Role Emerging Placement in a Mental Health Horticultural Community

Carr R: Growing Well, Cole F: University of Cumbria

The purpose of this research was to integrate and extend knowledge of two contemporary areas of occupational therapy practice, those of role emerging practice and 'green care' horticultural activities (Fieldhouse & Sempik, 2014). The context was a new role emerging placement, in a horticultural community with no previous occupational therapy input. The study evaluated the effects of occupational therapy on one individual's recovery and the wider contribution to the mental health facility.

A qualitative methodology using semi-structured, in-depth interviews of one service user and the volunteer coordinator was utilised via purposive sampling, providing phenomenological perspectives.

Audio-recorded data were transcribed verbatim and member-checked for authenticity by participants (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Reflexivity through journal reflections, discussions and supervision further ensured trustworthiness. Data were analysed thematically, using a matrix framework involving a three-tier process – themes devised, tables collated and analysis repeated to ensure creditable outcomes.

The findings identified specific aspects of the programme effective in promoting the individual's recovery and occupational engagement. Two main themes emerged: understanding occupation and a person-centred approach. The conclusions highlighted the contribution of a role-emerging placement to an existing facility, and how an occupational perspective and engagement in occupation enhanced existing practice.

This exploratory research contributes to applying occupational therapy theory to practice by emphasising the importance of an individual's understanding of themselves as an occupational being, and the importance of individualised interventions. Further research into the importance of individuals' understanding of themselves as occupational beings would be of value to occupational science and therapy evidence.

Ethical approval was given by the ethics committee of the University of Cumbria prior to the commencement of the research.

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Keywords

Mental health, Occupational therapy, Students

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Author Biographies

Rebecca Carr is a recently qualified occupational therapist working a newly established role in mental health. She has a great interest in the occupational therapy paradigm shift and in the promotion of role-emerging practice, with a passion for sharing the importance of occupation in regards to health and wellbeing.

Fiona Cole is an occupational therapist with a mental health background and senior lecturer at the University of Cumbria. She is interested in how occupational science can inform practice and in particular in exploring occupational engagement with physical activities and the influences on health and wellbeing.

Session S12.2 (FP)

Plot to Pot to Plate – The Therapeutic Journey from Derelict Allotment to Cookbook for Mental Health Clients in Fife

Sanders D: NHS Fife

As a spin-off to the successful development of a derelict allotment through therapeutic interventions, funding was secured to run a cooking group and to have clients produce a cookbook, to support the addition and transfer of fresh fruit and vegetables into dietary routines. A practically based project-led group intervention provided clients with specific cooking-related skills, social opportunity, and opportunity to experiment with new dietary options, a concept reported by Laidlaw (2010). This intervention was driven by having a purpose to the sessions to create a cookbook of simple, balanced and economical meals incorporating produce grown at Kelty Haven, and required clients to select and participate in 'road-testing' the recipes as a quality control. Additionally, there were opportunities to be involved in one-to-one elements of the book, including photography and cover artwork.