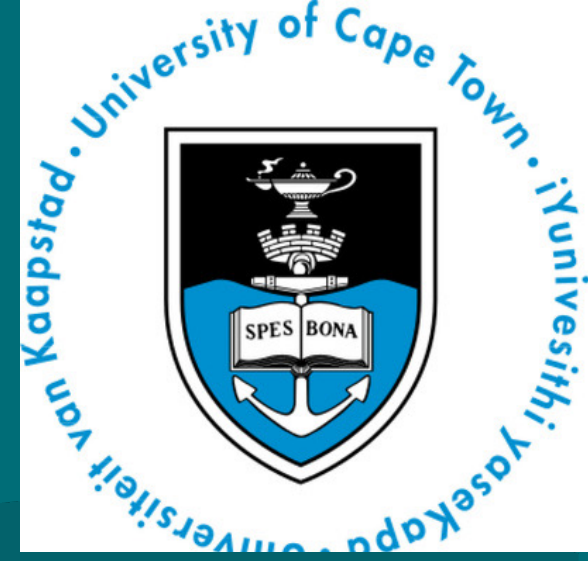


Navigating identity, representation & privilege: reflections from the field



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INTRODUCTION

Enacting critical occupational science involves becoming more conscious about one's positionality and how power influences human occupation across contexts. This study focuses on strategies used to work towards a justice orientated approach in practice.

Justice Oriented Practice Definition:

“Justice-oriented practice in OT is a form of practice that recognises that occupational inequities are not accidental or individual, but are produced through social, political, and structural conditions (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004; Hammell, 2017)”

OBJECTIVES

- To promote an occupational justice & equity-oriented practice.
- Explore the development of critical reflexivity as related to a justice oriented approach among OT practitioners.
- Describe strategies adopted and key insights into building capacities for critical reflexivity.
- Examine how critical reflexivity translated into practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach :

Participatory action research was used involving 3 early career OT practitioners and 1 OT senior scholar.

Data Collection :

3 critical dialogue sessions and reflective journals that we wrote during our undergraduate studies.

Data Analysis

Thematic data analysis.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Key Categories	Illustrative quotes
Pushing through discomfort	<p>“I was not comfortable with issues of equity and diversity.”</p> <p>“It is quite uncomfortable to be in those spaces.”</p> <p>“It was one of those taboo topics.”</p>
Umntu ngumntu ngabntu (Relational learning)	<p>“I started to learn from the group and grasp things that I could actually apply in practice.”</p> <p>“Everyone’s point of view or point of reference is taken into consideration before making a crucial decision.”</p>
Ongoing reflective practice	<p>“My approach to ensuring justice-orientated practice was based on action reflection.”</p>
Intentional Decentralization of power	<p>“To ensure my socially ascribed power did not predispose my clients to injustice.”</p>
Language adaptation	<p>“Introducing programmes that are written in the patient’s mother tongue.”</p>
Challenging hierarchical systems	<p>“As health professionals, we should all have the power to have a say.”</p>
Evaluation of power, privilege and positionality	<p>“I can use that same power to actually change the exclusionary system.”</p>
Coordinating care to reduce structural and socio-economic barriers	<p>“Let’s try make sure that we book our patients for the same day.”</p>

DISCUSSION

- A community of practice approach supported collective reflection, accountability, and justice-oriented action in clinical settings.
- Justice-oriented practice was enacted through the intentional use of multiple, context-responsive strategies, rather than a single approach.
- These findings highlight justice-oriented occupational therapy as an ongoing, adaptive process embedded in everyday practice.

CONCLUSION

This paper describes the key, diverse strategies adopted to enhance the occupational therapy practitioners' critical reflexivity. Consequently, the increased conscientisation around issues of occupational justice and equity brings forth deeper learning about the social dynamics and politics of human occupation as a situated phenomenon. This demonstrates another instance of an alliance between occupational science and occupational therapy.

Literature cited:

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