

# Implementation of the coaching approach to the Finnish context

Experiences and Perspectives of Occupational Therapists

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# Background

- A collaborative, dialogue-based approach that supports person in identifying meaningful goals and planning how to achieve them<sup>1</sup>.
- Promising approach with positive outcomes for clients, families, and therapists<sup>2</sup>.
- Many theoretical approaches in occupational therapy<sup>2</sup>.
- Implementation requires training, practice, and system-level support<sup>2</sup>.
- Shifts professional roles and challenges existing service structures<sup>2</sup>.

1 Townsend et al 2013 pp. 119-120

2 Allen et al 2021, Cunningham et al 2022, Graham et al 2024, Gerhardt et al 2024, Laverdure et al 2021, Miller-Kuhaneck et al 2018, Novak & Honan 2019, Patter et al 2024, Seruya et al 2022, Tach et al 2025

# Aim of study

- To explore the applicability of a coaching approach in the Finnish context.

## Research questions:

How occupational therapists experience the implementation of the coaching approach into community-based setting in Finland?

# Data & method

- **Data collection:**
  - “*Co-design coaching approach in Finland 2022-2025*”<sup>3</sup>
  - Development project and an implementation study<sup>3</sup>
  - Interview 15 OTs from community setting (7 individual interviews & 3 group interviews) total 527 min/123 pages
- **Qualitative study:** the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA)<sup>4</sup>
  - 6 steps: 1) data familiarization and writing familiarization notes; 2) systematic data coding; 3) generating initial themes from coded and collated data; 4) developing and reviewing themes; 5) refining, defining and naming themes; and 6) writing the report ·

<sup>3</sup> Juntunen et al 2025

<sup>4</sup> Braun & Clark 2021 & 2024)

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# Findings

- Theme 1: Coaching approach deepened client-centredness and mutual understanding.
- Theme 2: Collaborative relationship built by focusing on the client's daily activities.
- Theme 3: Applying a coaching approach requires resources and effort.

# Theme 1:

## Coaching approach deepened client-centredness and mutual understanding.

- Supported active listening.
- Goals were more meaningful and individualized.
- A slower rhythm and tempo supported an understanding of everyday life.
- Strengths-based work increased motivation. It promoted better trust and a therapeutic relationship.

## **Theme 2:**

# **Collaborative relationship was built by focusing on the client's daily activities.**

- Focusing on the client's daily activities supported their participation, as well as that of their loved ones.
- Shared analysis of occupational performance helped identify and commit to feasible solutions that enable participation.
- This increased engagement, commitment, and satisfaction.

## **Theme 3:**

# **Applying a coaching approach requires resources and effort.**

- Implementation was restricted by clients' functional ability and family burden.
- Conflicts between the approach and institutional guidelines and procedures caused OTs extra stress.
- Implementation required learning and training, so it was more difficult than the OTs had assumed.

# Conclusion

Coaching approach is applicable in the Finnish context.

However,

- Occupational therapists need more education and training of coaching approach.
- Greater flexibility is required at the system level in Finland.

Thus, larger context-oriented implementation study is needed.

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