



Role-Emerging Occupational Therapy in a Rape Crisis Setting

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Trigger Warning

This presentation includes includes content related to sexual violence, trauma, and survivor experiences. Some material may be distressing.

Introduction

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- 8-week -3rd year final placement
 - Students are asked to express an interest in the area due to the nature of the service
 - Prior to the placement, students meet with the volunteer coordinator of the service to outline the expectation and orient to the environment and the needs of those who use the service.
 - Student receive training from the service and are supervised and graded in answering crisis helpline calls



Placement objectives

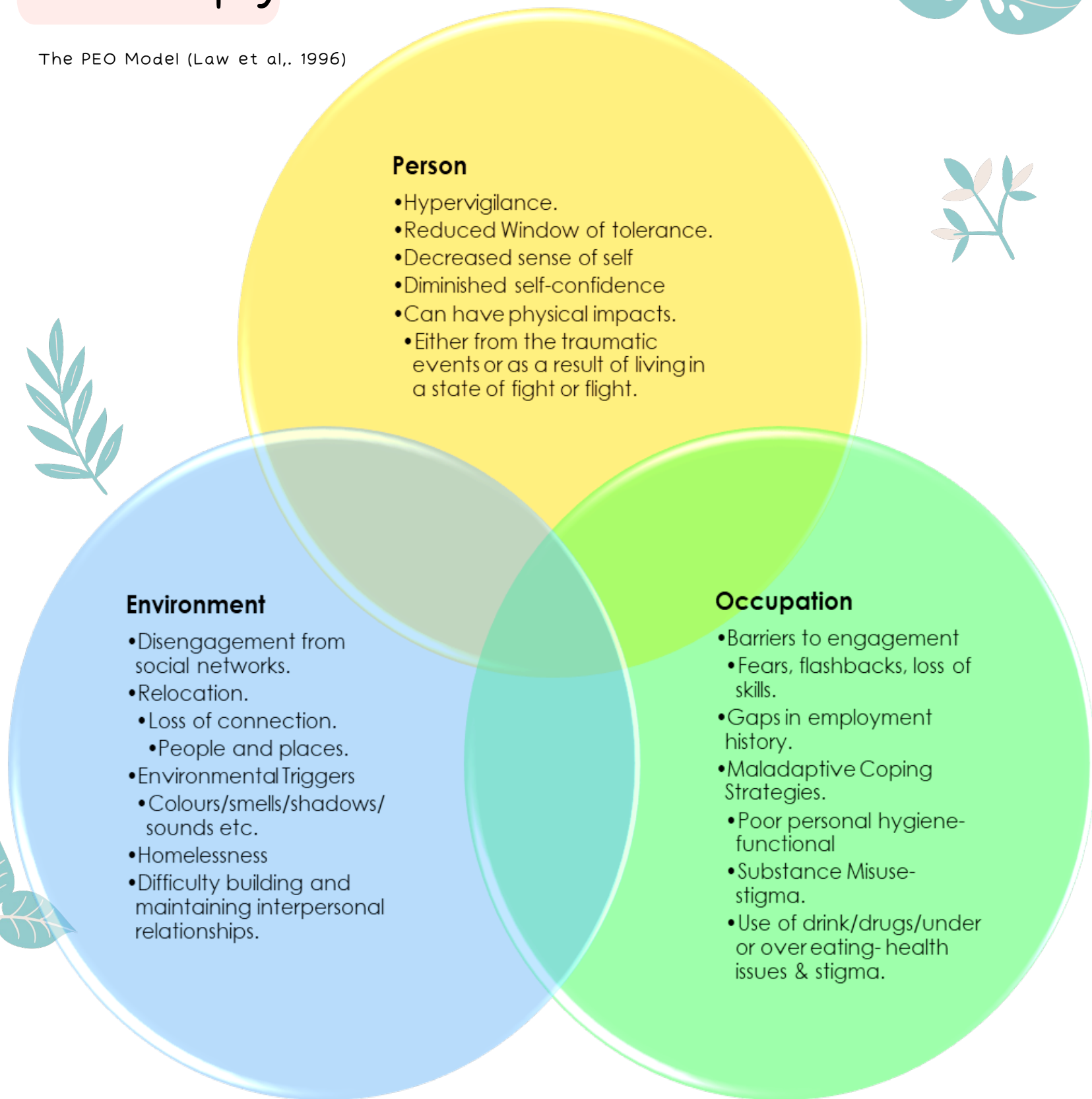
- To explore how occupational therapy can address the occupational needs of survivors
- To integrate trauma-informed principles into all therapeutic interactions
- To develop sustainable occupation-focused interventions within this specialist setting



The role of Occupational Therapy



The PEO Model (Law et al., 1996)



What is Trauma Informed Care?



- Safety
- Trust
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment





Example of Interventions

- Sensory audit – adjusted lighting, sound, and layout to create a calmer, safer space.
- Visual guides and POV Walkthroughs – to familiarise clients with journey to and around office.
- Individual sensory plans – for light, sound, movement and posture to support self regulation.
- Exploration and discovery of interests and meaningful activity to rebuild confidence and identity.
- Routine building to promote stability, support and participation
- Vocational rehab – e.g. CVs, education return, routine building)
- Assisting in accessing and trialling equipment e.g. walking aids, bath board, adapted cutlery etc.

What next?

- Rape and sexual violence can deeply impact a survivor's sense of self and occupational identity, often leading to withdrawal from valued roles and activities.
- OT supports recovery by fostering safety, empowerment, and self-efficacy through meaningful, choice-led occupations.
- Using a trauma-informed approach, we focused on collaboration and strength-building to help survivors set achievable goals and regain control and purpose in daily life.
- The lack of research/ provision within this area is an occupational injustice
- Further research, partnerships and share exploration are essential, and we warmly welcome collaborators interested in advancing this work.

Resources

- **RASAC:** <https://www.rasac.co.uk/>
- **Rape Crisis England & Wales:** <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/>
- **NO MORE Global Directory (200+ countries):** <https://nomoredirectory.org/>
- **Lila.Help (Global GBV helplines):** <https://lila.help/>

References

- Law, M., Cooper, B., Strong, S., Stewart, D., Rigby, P., & Letts, L. (1996).** The person-environment-occupation model: A transactive approach to occupational performance. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 63(1), 9–23.
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