

“Our occupations can keep us safe: an exploration of the centrality of our occupational lives during life transitions”

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Abstract

Occupational therapists and occupational scientists are concerned with what people do and what happens when our lives are affected by discontinuity. We are fascinated by the way that occupational lives are configured and the constellation of occupations which are meaningful and functional for individuals, groups and society. Our lives are characterised by transition throughout the lifespan which may be predictable and voluntary or the very opposite. We need to be aware of the discontinuity that either positive or negative change can elicit. However, a basic tenet of this exploration is that occupation can both facilitate and protect our sense of self during transitional events.

This presentation will explore the nature of life transitions, theoretical underpinning from occupational science and offer examples and illustrations of the way that individuals have used their chosen occupations to maintain occupational resilience during transitional change. Occupation perhaps is the mediator between continuity and change in our lives.