

Conceptual model of the purpose of meaningful occupation for people living with dementia developed through Systematic Review and Qualitative Evidence Synthesis



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Abstract

Guidance for the provision of care for people with dementia asserts that occupation for people with dementia should be meaningful. Through analysing the different purposes that occupation for people with dementia can serve, this study depicts the types of meaning that are seen as stemming from occupation.

The conceptual model was based on systematic review and evidence synthesis of 20 qualitative papers using meta-ethnography.

The fundamental purpose of occupation identified was to support the person with dementia to feel they were living a meaningful and fulfilling life. Three domains which support a person to gain a sense of fulfilment through their occupations:

A catalytic environment: For an occupation to be meaningful for a person with dementia it must be perceived by them as having value and legitimacy, this is supported by the physical and social environment around the person.

A meaningful life: Living a meaningful life involves the person with dementia continuing to maintain links from across their life course in a way which supports their sense of personal value. This is reflective of their past, though also supports their present and future identity.

Occupation as a tool: Occupation can also be used a tool by people with dementia and those supporting them as a means to bring about a desired effect e.g. relieving anxiety

Conclusions: The model proposes how occupation could support meaning in multiple ways, and considered how these forms of meaning were interacted, choice, and independence at mealtimes. *International Journal of Older People Nursing*

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