

Name: Jozi Daniel

Student Number: 2521417

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Lecturer's Name: Aliyuda Ali

Assignment Title: *Research Report: The Role of Occupational Therapy in Supporting Mental Health in the UK*

Research Report: The Role of Occupational Therapy in Supporting Mental Health in the UK

Introduction

Occupational therapy is an important part of health and social care in the UK, especially when it comes to supporting people with mental health condition. Occupational therapists help individuals take part in everyday activities and become more independent and self reliant. With more people experiencing mental health issues, there is a large growth of individuals in need of support that is person-centred and practical. My report looks at how occupational therapy supports people with mental health conditions, why this is so important, and how research can be used to understand it better. It will also look at different sources of information, research methods, and reflect on what I have learnt along the way.

Selection of Research Topic

A very important issue in the UK health and social care field is the increasing numbers of people experiencing mental health problems and the need for effective help. Conditions such as anxiety and depression are becoming more common in everyday households, and this is putting pressure on service providers due to large incoming numbers of potential clients become unmanageable. Occupational therapists play a key role in helping people manage their conditions by supporting them with daily routines, coping strategies, and activities that improve their overall wellbeing/lifestyle.

This issue affects many different groups of people, including young adults, people in work, and also older adults. It also affects organisations like the NHS, which has to deal with high demand for mental health services. Occupational therapy is important because it helps people become more independent and improves their quality of life. Without this kind of support, people may struggle with everyday tasks, become socially isolated, and rely more on health services rather than focusing on being more self-reliant with necessary support.

I chose this topic because I am interested in becoming an occupational therapist in the future. I wanted to understand more about what the role involves, especially in mental health. This topic links to what I have been learning in my course and in my day to day life, such as person-centred care and supporting individuals to live independently. I also think mental health is a very relevant issue today, so it is important to learn more about how people can be supported, and how they can be put in track to rely on less support as times goes on.

Evaluating Information Sources

One of the main sources I looked at was the NHS website. It explains what occupational therapists do and how they support people with mental health conditions. The NHS says that occupational therapists help people manage daily activities, return to work, and improve their social life (NHS, 2023). This source is useful because it is reliable and based on real healthcare practice in the UK. It helps show how occupational therapy makes a difference in people lives and supports recovery.

Another useful source is the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). This college provides information about how occupational therapy works and why it is important.

It explains that taking part in meaningful activities can improve mental health and help people recover (RCOT, 2022). I found this source helpful because it comes from professionals in the field and is based on evidence. It also links well to person centred care because it focuses on what matters to the individuals in need. Reminds me of similar care I used to provide for my grandmother with alongside other members of the family on a daily bases.

A third source I used is Mind, which is a well known mental health charity. Mind talks about the challenges people face when dealing with mental health problems, including difficulty accessing support and how it affects daily life (Mind,2023). This source is important to me because I've had similar struggles in the past and this site in particular shows the experiences of service users, not just professionals. It helps give a larger picture of why support like occupational therapy is needed.

Even though these sources are useful, there are still some gaps. For example, there is not a lot of information about the long term impact of occupational therapy on mental health. There is also limited research on how easy it is for people in different parts of the UK to access most of the available services. More work/research in these areas would help improve services and make them more equal for everyone from all circumstances and backgrounds.

Research Methodologies

If I was to carry out research on this topic, I would use the mixed methods approach, which means collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data could be gathered using short surveys. For example, people receiving occupational therapy could answer questions about how their mental health, daily routines, and overall self reliant lifestyle has improved over time. The surveys could include simple 1 – 5 rating scales or multiple-choice questions that are not too complex, which would give clear results that can be measured and compared. This kind of data is useful because it shows patterns and trends across a larger group of people, making it easier to understand the general impact of occupational therapy.

Qualitative data could also be collected through interviews with both people using the service and occupational therapists. This would allow people to explain their experiences in more detail, such as what specific activities helped them, how they felt supported, and what challenges they faced on a daily basis. I think this is very important because numbers alone do not accurately show how people really feel or what the therapy means to them personally. Hearing people's stories can give a much deeper understanding of the value of occupational therapy.

The research would focus on adults and young adults receiving occupational therapy for mental health in the UK. It would also be important to follow ethical guidelines, such as gaining consent from all participants, keeping information confidential, and making sure no one experiences harm. Overall, using both surveys and interviews would give a complete picture of how occupational therapy supports people and helps improve their mental health, independence, and everyday life.

Data Collection

For this research, I would collect both primary and secondary data to get a better understanding of the topic. Primary data could be collected using online surveys and interviews with people who are receiving occupational therapy for mental health support. The surveys would include simple questions where people can rate things like their mood, daily activities, and how independent they feel over time. This would make it easier to compare results and see if any improvements have been established.

I would also use interviews so people can explain their experiences in more detail. I think this is important because it gives a more real understanding of how occupational therapy actually helps people in their day to day lives.

Secondary data would come from sources like the NHS, RCOT and Mind to support the research. All information would be kept confidential, and participants would give consent and have the right to withdraw at any time if they feel uncomfortable.

Conclusion and Reflection

In conclusion, occupational therapy plays an important role in supporting people with mental health conditions in the UK. It helps people become more independent, improve their daily lives, and feel better overall which then allows them to become more independent.

The sources I looked at all showed that occupational therapy is a valuable part of mental health care and supports people in a practical and person-centred way.

From this assignment, I have learned more about how research works in health and social care and why it is important to use reliable sources. I have also improved my understanding of occupational therapy and how it supports people. This will be useful for my future studies and career as my aim is to focus directly on young athletes pursuing their dreams. Being a father of athletes myself, I see where occupational therapy is needed, even after all the long hours of physical training doing some amazing things I couldn't even dream of putting my body through, a lot of athletes still go home feeling overwhelmed and unworthy. This let me know how important the mental side of daily life is for people of all ages.

This topic is important to me because I want to become an occupational therapist for loved ones first and foremost. Learning about this role has helped me understand what skills and knowledge I will need. It has also made me more aware of the importance of supporting people with mental health conditions in a respectful and effective way.

Overall, this assignment has helped me develop my knowledge, research skills, and understanding of health and social care. It has also shown me how important occupational therapy is and why more research is needed to improve services in the future.

References (Harvard Style)

NHS (2023) *Occupational therapy*. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk>

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2022) *Occupational therapy and mental health*.

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Mind (2023) *Mental health support and services*. Available at: <https://www.mind.org.uk>