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Disaster Response, Recovery and Occupational Therapy: Learning from Field Experiences

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Title: Disaster Response, Recovery and Occupational Therapy:

Learning from Field Experiences

Key Words: Occupation, Theory and Practice; Trends and Projections of Occupational Therapy; Culturally Appropriate Practices

Scope/Field: Other/Disaster Management

Age group: Not Applicable

Introduction: Disaster Management is increasingly being recognized as an emerging field of practice for occupational therapists across the globe; however, cross-cultural research that links Occupation and Occupational Therapy to the field is limited. Consequently, there is a lack of culturally and contextually relevant models and frameworks to promote the profession's involvement and guide practice in the field from an occupational perspective.

Objectives: The primary objective of this paper presentation is to introduce preliminary findings from a qualitative study that investigates the role of Occupational Therapy theory and practice in Disaster Management, including Disaster Response, Recovery and Preparedness. The study is currently being conducted by the author through the University of Sydney, Australia toward the completion of a doctoral degree.

Methods: The study utilizes qualitative methodology and involves an extensive and cross-disciplinary literature review combined with a phenomenological exploration of the experiences of Occupational Therapists in the field. The data is cross-cultural and is generated from in depth interviews with informants from around the globe.

Results: Preliminary findings will be correlated with the literature and presented to reveal an emerging picture of Occupation and Occupational Therapy in Disaster Management. Implications for supporting and strengthening the profession's involvement and practice in the field will be elaborated.

Conclusion: The aim of this presentation is to discuss the role of Occupational Therapy theory and practice in Disaster Management as an emerging field of practice and highlight potential implications for the profession and Occupational Therapy practice.

Contribution to the Practice: It is anticipated that this cutting edge research will contribute an evidence-based foundation that links Occupational Therapy theory and practice with Disaster Management and potentially strengthens professional involvement in the field. Evidence generated from this study will provide the necessary grounding from which to forge roles in the field and construct relevant models and theories from practice.