



PARTICIPATION IN DAILY OCCUPATIONS

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Occupational therapy, as noted in Chapter 1, focuses on enabling individuals and groups to participate fully in meaningful daily occupations. “Occupations are what we do. They provide the basis for feelings about ourselves. They engage us in the world around us to survive and maintain ourselves” (Christiansen, Baum, & Bass-Haugen, 2005, p. 4). Daily occupations include “everything people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves (self-care), enjoying life (leisure), and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities (productivity)” (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists [CAOT], 2002).

Disease or illness can impact on a client’s participation in daily occupations, starting from the acute stages of disease and moving to chronic disease management. For instance, Parkinson’s disease can begin with mild impairments and result in high levels of disability and greatly reduced participation and quality of life (Yarrow, 1999).

This chapter includes outcomes that are related to an individual’s overall engagement in daily occupations within the environment in which he or she lives. Such occupations include self-management, personal care, community mobility, household and

community-based tasks, and participation in social and community life. Outcomes that focus on overall participation or several categories of participation are captured in this chapter. The studies summarized in this chapter deal with interventions that build skills and lead to improved participation in meaningful occupation(s).

Conceptual Background

As described in Chapter 1, occupational therapy focuses on enabling a client’s participation in occupations of daily life that are meaningful to him or her and bring purpose to his or her life. The most important outcome of occupational therapy intervention is to maintain or improve a person’s occupational performance (defined as a person’s ability to perform specific occupations, as well as satisfaction with his or her performance).

The World Health Organization’s ([WHO], 2001) International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF), also described in Chapter 1, focuses on the relationship between health conditions,