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## **The Impact of Adult Play on Quality of Life**

### **Abstract**

#### **Introductory Statement**

According to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework 4th ed. (OTPF-4), play is one of the eight occupations that are meaningful to human life. Research involving children and imaginative play has found that imaginary play allows for social interaction skills, internal autonomy, language development, and emotional regulation skills. Although play has been established as an effective way to produce positive health outcomes in children, little is known about the impact of play on the quality of life of adults. Despite the importance of play, cultural and societal norms often minimize adults' participation in play, which may limit the exploration and use of play as an occupational therapy (OT) intervention for improving health outcomes in adult populations. The hypothesis of this research infers that the accepted importance of play in children could benefit the adult population's mental health and quality of life in a similar way. This research attempts to discover whether play could improve the quality of life of adult clients and impact their lives in a positive and holistically therapeutic way.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to investigate adults' (18 years and older) preferred methods of play, the factors that promote and inhibit their engagement in play, and how play impacts their quality of life. We want to understand why adults do not engage in play as much in their everyday lives to eliminate barriers and increase play opportunities to improve health outcomes in adult populations.

## **Methods**

The proposed research will be a mixed-method study incorporating qualitative and quantitative data using a Google Forms survey. It will have open-ended and Likert-scale questions designed to identify the amount and type of play adults participate in, their experiences during play, and how they perceive play affects their overall well-being. Participants for this study will be adults ages 18 years and older who are currently enrolled or employed at Tennessee State University. Recruitment will involve face-to-face solicitation with a flyer containing information about the survey and a QR code link to access the survey. Participants will also sign a consent form as part of the Google Forms survey before participating in the study.

## **Findings**

Data collection is in progress and will be included as part of the poster presentation.

## **Contribution to Discipline**

Results from this study will contribute to occupational therapists' understanding of the impact of play on adult quality of life and overall well-being. The hope is that this knowledge will promote the exploration and use of play and play activities as a possible intervention strategy when treating adult populations.

## **Professional Writing**

On completion of the data collection and analysis, this research will be submitted for publication.