

The Importance of Occupational Therapy in Caregivers' Occupational Balance and Grief Processing in End-Of-Life Care

Introduction

Occupational therapists are trained to work and care for patients and their caregivers in end-of-life care settings but are rarely used during this life transition. A literature search indicated that little to no education or training was provided to caregivers on transitioning away from being a caregiver post-death. In this study, we will address the role of occupational therapy in helping caregivers in the transition of life, post-caregiver status.

Purpose

The purpose of our study is to explore the needs of caregivers in areas of occupational balance and grief in the practice area of end-of-life care. Our study will address the following research questions: 1. Do caregivers using hospice services receive education and training by an occupational therapist on life post-caregiver status? 2. How are these services impacting the grief process and occupational balance of these caregivers?

Methods

This will be a mixed methods study using a questionnaire that is composed of both Likert scale and open-ended questions. The questionnaire will have up to 14 questions and incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data. Participants of this study will include caregivers of patients, as defined below, that have died within the past 6 months. Caregivers will be recruited through social media platforms, social media groups, flyers with a Quick Response (QR) code, the American Occupational Therapy Association platforms, and the Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association platforms.

Findings

Data Collection is in progress and data will be included as part of the poster presentation submission.

Contribution to Occupational Therapy

The completion of this study will provide evidence that the role of occupational therapy in the end-of-life practice area is needed as a resource for caregivers in addition to the patients being treated.

Professional writing

We anticipate submitting this research to a peer-reviewed journal.