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Welcome to the eighth issue of  
*Spotlight on Occupation*

As Rugby World Cup fever grips the country many of us have altered our usual routines as our occupation of primary importance has become watching rugby. For Be.accessible it is a spring board for social change to create a 100% accessible society for all. Rather than viewing this only in terms of the physical environment, Be. brings the largest untapped market in the world to the attention of businesses, venues and organisations – the access customer. Improving access both physical and social enables all of us to enjoy the environment, including people with disabilities, older people, and parents with pushchairs who make up 20% of the population.

Check it out at [www.beaccessible.org.nz](http://www.beaccessible.org.nz) Another great example of kiwi ingenuity. Go the All Blacks!

Feel free to hand SPOTLIGHT on to anyone who might be interested in it. Previous issues are available at <http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/health-sciences/occupational-science-and-therapy/spotlight-on-occupation-newsletter>

Sticking to the plot: The nature and meaning of family routines in the context of adolescent mental illness

**AUTHOR:** Koome, F

**Summary:** Seven parent and adolescent (aged 16 – 17) participants were recruited through an adolescent mental health service for this qualitative descriptive study. Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed that everyday functional routines have multiple purposes, serving both as a practical structure to support the household and as a foundation for well-being for all family members. There were natural and deliberate variations to the routines of family life, to accommodate occupational demands and health needs, and to create variety. Routines were used as a gauge of the adolescent's mental state, to provide stability and continuity in family life, and to facilitate meaningful family time.

**Comment:** The findings show that in families attuned to the value of routines, they are seen as fundamental to the well-being and recovery of the adolescents and the maintenance of family life and relationships. Daily occupations were structured, kept up and adapted to ensure necessary tasks were completed and to create a sense of 'being a family', particularly in stressful times.

**Reference:** (2011). Available from - <http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/>



Barriers to participation in recreation within open-spaces encountered by people with impairments:

A qualitative-descriptive study

**AUTHOR:** Howard, S

**Summary:** Despite societal expectations that all New Zealanders will be able to enjoy the natural environment, people with disabilities experience physical and social barriers. This small-scale, qualitative descriptive study explored the views of four people with a disability or a child with a disability. Interview data were thematically analysed using content mapping. Five themes emerged: natural barriers; infrastructural barriers; separation—the impact of barriers on participation; partnership; and facilitators to participation—policies and enablers. Considered together, the themes revealed that policies and enablers are the link between participation and separation.

**Comment:** Engaging with nature includes looking at plants and animals, admiring the view, just 'being there', and active participation in occupation. Those experiences are important for human health, well-being and development. This study underlines the impact of lack of access, and the need for partnerships between people with disability and local and regional councils. Reference: (2011). Available from—<http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/>

# SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

## Being occupied with what matters in advanced age

**AUTHOR:** Wright-St Clair, V

**Summary:** Understanding the relationship between occupational engagement and ageing well lies behind this article. It illuminates one key finding from an interpretive phenomenological study exploring the everyday lives of 15 elder New Zealanders.

The notion of 'doing what matters' relates to the participants having one occupation that was of primary importance to them. This one compelling pursuit showed as an enduring interest over time and was variously spoken of as being *my big thing*; *my main thing*; and *my greatest interest*. Interpretively, the older person's engagement in this one pursuit shows 'who I have been,' 'who I am now' and 'who I will be.'



**Comment:** This study's findings suggest a current research emphasis on examining the activity categories and patterns of occupations of older peoples' participation in the everyday ought to be extended to further understand how engagement in subjectively compelling occupations is associated with ageing well and longevity. Practitioners focused on enhancing elders' engagement in occupations will be interested in this article.

**Reference:** (2012). *Journal of Occupational Science*. Soon to be available from <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/loi/rocc20>

## Studying Occupation

**Lecturer:** Clare Hocking

**AUT offers two papers focusing on occupation, both available on campus or by distance. *Participation and Health* explores the relationship between the things people do and their health, which involves understanding why people do what they do, and how that contributes to competence and satisfaction, builds identity, conveys culture, and structures society. *Enabling Participation* explores how occupation can be put to work to restore and promote health.**

**Qualification:** Certificate of Proficiency, Honours degree, Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma of Health Science (Occupational Practice), or a Masters degree.

**Entry Requirements:** All health professionals can enrol. Those with a Bachelors degree can enrol direct into the Masters, holders of a Diploma or Health Department Certificate initially enrol into the Postgrad Certificate or Diploma.

## Professional Development for Occupation-Centred Practice

**AUTHORS:** Reed, K & Hocking, C

**Summary:** This study aimed to understand how occupational therapy managers and team leaders in New Zealand can support therapists to use theory in practice. Six co-researchers were recruited and introduced to the Canadian theory of Enabling Occupation over a 9 month period. A participatory action research methodology was used to investigate how new theoretical understandings were taken up and applied in their supervision of others' practice. This involved the co-researchers reading chapters from *Enabling Occupation II* (Townsend & Polatajko, 2007) followed by a monthly teleconference. Thematic analysis of the transcripts identified the key strategies used to develop occupation-centered practice.

**Comment:** This is one in a series of studies investigating what happens when occupational therapists are introduced to new theoretical ideas and come together to talk about the content. The project started in Australia and has spread to New Zealand and the UK. The findings of this study indicate that the co-researchers used strategies such as 1:1 supervision, professional development activities and conversations relating to caseloads to bring theory to the fore, which in turn influenced practice, organisational processes and the profile of occupational therapy within the multidisciplinary team.

**References:** NZAOT Clinical Workshops, November 2011, Waitangi, New Zealand. Townsend, E., & Polatajko, H. (Eds.). (2007). *Enabling occupation II: Advancing an occupational therapy vision for health, well-being, & justice through occupation*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists.