

Creating a Balanced Lifestyle

Understanding the Impact of Participation for Health and Wellbeing in the Context of Social Isolation

Consider the Following

Think about these questions; note down your thoughts and reflections

- 1) What do the words *participation* and *occupation* mean to you?**
- 2) What *occupations* did you *participate* in prior to the Covid-19 outbreak?**
- 3) What *occupations* do you *participate* in now?**
- 4) Have you noticed a change in your *occupations*?**





- 5) What skills and strengths do you identify in yourself?
- 6) What strengths and barriers do you identify in your environment?
- 7) What *occupations* have you previously wanted to *participate* in, and what has been a barrier to you participating in them in the past?
- 8) What does a *Balanced Lifestyle* look like to you?



Defining *Occupation*

Occupations refer to the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families and with communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life.

Occupations include activities people need to, want to and are expected to do (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2020)





Defining *Participation*



Participation literally means **involvement** or **sharing** in an activity hence, *taking part*.

Participation in the everyday occupations of life is a vital part of human development.

Through **participation**, we learn **skills** and **abilities**, **connection with others** and **communities**, and **find purpose and meaning in life**.



Participation in Occupational Therapy

Participation has always been a central focus of the Occupational Therapy profession.

Participation is what occupational therapy is all about. It is our professions unique contribution to society.

One of the founders of the occupational therapy profession explained it this way:

A human is an organism that maintains and balances itself in the world of reality and actuality by being in active life and active use....It is the use that we make of ourselves that gives the ultimate stamp to our every organ.



(Meyer, 1922, p. 1)



How have things Changed?

- The COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on the lives, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities worldwide.
- Impact on how people carry out their occupations for example: Accessing resources, undertaking activities of daily living, communicating, and travelling.
- Social isolation, feeling displaced, mental health issues and a decrease in wellbeing are the result.



The term occupational therapist use for this phenomenon is

Occupational Injustice



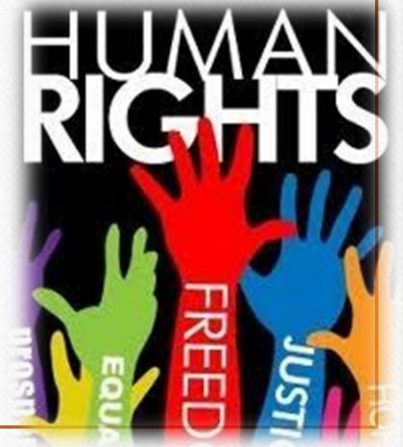
Occupational Justice

- **Occupational justice:** the **right** all people have to do the occupations they have to do and want to do which contribute positively to their health and well-being (Wilcock, 2006; Wilcock & Townsend, 2009).
- An **occupationally just** world is one where all individuals can flourish by doing what they decide is most meaningful and useful to themselves and to their families, communities, and nations (Wilcock & Townsend, 2009, p. 330).



Occupational Injustice

- When people are not able to do the things that matter to them, this is a **matter of injustice** (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004).
- **Occupational Deprivation** results when this is not possible.
- **Occupational Imbalance results** when too much time is spent occupied in one area of life at the expense of other areas (Stadnyk et al., 2010).
- **Occupational Imbalance** can occur when the timing of occupations is out of alignment with personal or physiological needs or **routines** (Wilcock, 2006).



Kathleen Matuska and Charles Christiansen are two occupational therapists who have researched the theory behind creating a balanced lifestyle.

Their description of a balanced lifestyle is one which is:



A satisfying pattern of daily activity that is healthful, meaningful and sustainable, within the context of their current life circumstances.

Meeting basic health and safety needs



Feeling engaged, challenged and competent



Having rewarding and self-affirming relationships with others



Creating meaning and a positive identity



Elements of a Balanced Lifestyle

The **Kawa Model** as a way to Create a Balanced Lifestyle

If your life were a river, how would you want it to flow?

Along the way there can be obstacles that impede the flow of our river.

You can increase the flow of your river by maximising the spaces in between the obstacles



Life is like a river...

Improving the *Flow* of your River: Creating a more Balanced Lifestyle



My River

(Based on the *Kawa Model*, Iwama, 2006)

Consider the Following:

Rocks (*Current life difficulties*)

Drift Wood (*Values, personality, personal resources*)

River Bed (*Environment*)

Spaces Between (*Occupations that bring life satisfaction*)



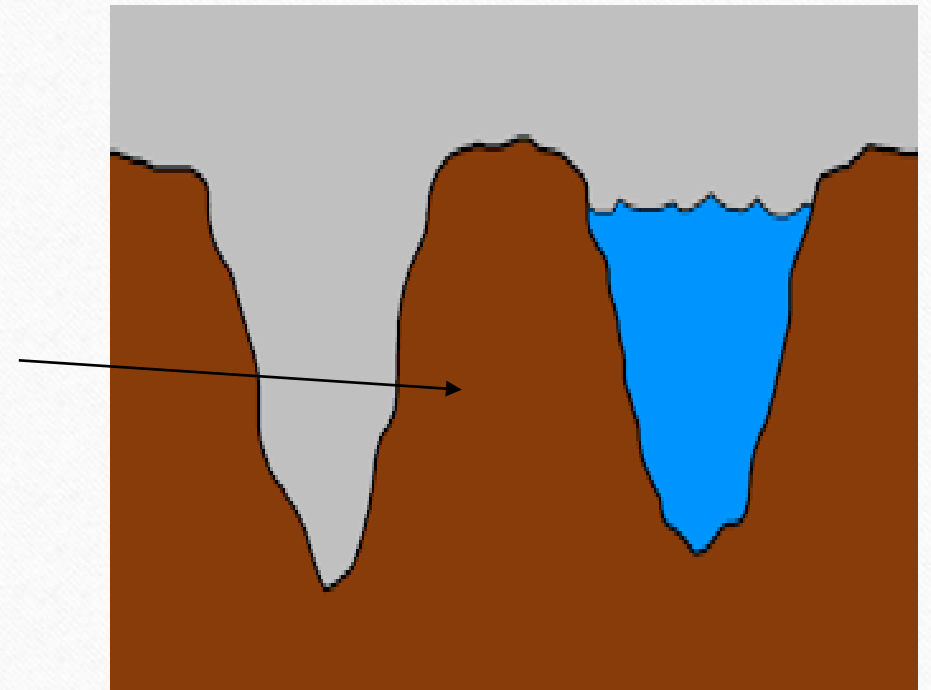
Using this model is a helpful way to organize your thoughts and feelings at this time, as a tool for reflection.

Defining your *River Bed*

The river walls and base is your environment, which gives the river its shape.

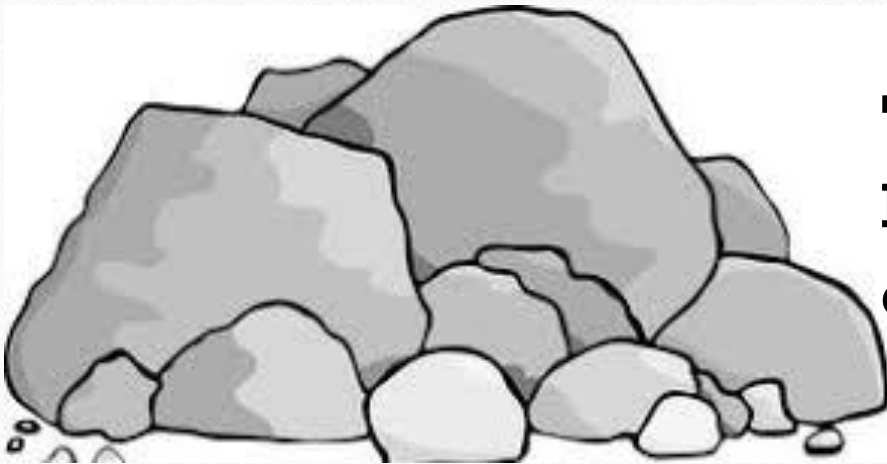
These can be things like: who you live with, the important people in your life, where you live and work, your family, healthcare professionals, schools, culture.

To improve the flow of your river: widen the river bed walls, change or modify your environment.



Identifying the *Rocks* in your Life

Rocks are your current life difficulties, fears or concerns which block and slow down the flow in your river.



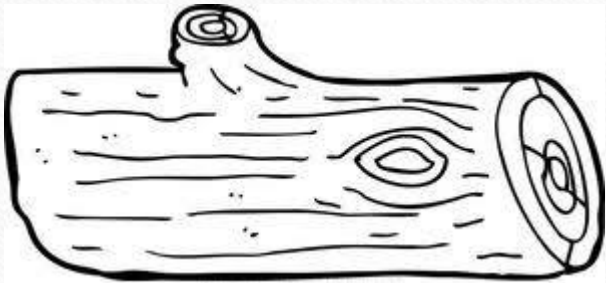
To increase the flow in your river, you have to break the rocks: remove the obstacles or make them smaller.

Identifying the *Driftwood* in your Life

The driftwood is your values, personality and personal resources.

Sometimes these can help you and sometimes they can hinder you.

The driftwood can further block the water or bump the rocks away, enhancing the flow.



Use the driftwood: your personal qualities or things that you already have to improve your situation.

Now is the perfect time to take stock and reflect on our *River*.
These resources may help you to do this:

Seven Tips for Staying Happy and Healthy During a Lockdown

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1fZkc8Tj7LpBYMKF1H0pc3t/seven-tips-for-staying-happy-and-healthy-during-a-lockdown>

Looking After your Health During Coronavirus Outbreak

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

Occupational Balance, A Reflection During the Covid 19 Crisis

<https://www.theothub.com/post/occupational-balance-a-reflection-during-during-the-covid-19-crisis>

Mental wellbeing while staying at home

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

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These resources may help you to do this:

Kashdan, TB. (2010) Psychological Flexibility as a Fundamental Aspect of Health, *Clinical Psychology Review*. 30(7). pp. 865–878.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2998793/>

Being Well with Rick Hanson

<https://www.rickhanson.net/being-well-podcast/>

Rick Hanson's Suggested Resources

<https://www.rickhanson.net/favorites/>

Kristin Neff: Self-Compassion Resources

<https://self-compassion.org/>

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