

# An Occupationally Oriented Sexuality and Maturation Workshop for at Risk Female Adolescents Staying in an Out-Of-Home Placement

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**Key words:** Population at risk, Adolescence, Sexuality, Occupational therapy

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Female adolescents experiencing distress, resulting from environmental and emotional neglect, suffer from exclusion and occupational injustice, leading to functional difficulties related to adolescence and sexual maturation. Occupational therapy has the unique ability to help at risk populations by exposing them to meaningful occupations and promoting their independence in daily life. The aim of the workshop presented here was to help the participants understand their needs as adolescent girls and as women through functional means, to facilitate identity formation and independence in sexuality. **Method.** The group included four girls aged 13-14 years. The therapeutic protocol included a listening circle, discussion and practice of structured content, and free dance. **Conclusion.** Functional intervention created a safe place for sharing intimate topics such as the appropriate age for sexual intercourse, birth control planning, comparison with their mothers' lifestyles and developing couple relationships. Addressing sexuality facilitates further intervention in future orientation, self-representation, and interpersonal communication. **Implications.** Occupational therapy has high potential for reducing anxiety and encouraging open, compassionate discourse on adolescence and sexuality sensitive issues. Indeed, occupational therapy intervention can provide a meaningful service for distressed populations. Thus, promoting occupational justice in the society as a whole. Increased research and occupational therapy services are required in the area of sexuality including for individuals from distressed populations.

funding and installing home adaptations. From this cohort 50 people (43 women and 7 men) were recruited and agreed to participate in the present follow-up study. The average age of the participants was 77.4 (SD=6.39), their average years of schooling was 10.8 years (SD=6.31). Most of the participants lived alone. Approximately one year subsequent to the conclusion of the program the researcher came to the home town of the participants (Safed) to conduct the follow-up evaluations. The research tools used were a demographic questionnaire, the Use and Contribution of Home Modifications (UCHM) questionnaire, the Usability in My Home (UIMH) questionnaire, the SAFER HOME safety assessment of function at home, Fear of falling, the Kettle Test, and a cognitive screening test – Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE). **Results:** Results of this study showed that most of the participants purchased and used the recommended assistive devices (72% purchased 2-3 assistive devices). Furthermore 84% said that they were mostly satisfied with them and would even recommend them to others. A positive correlation was found between the number of assistive devices purchased and the participants' perception that the devices contribute to safer functioning. The many research tools, in addition to the researcher's observation enabled the assessment of the contribution of the home adaptations. Most hypotheses were confirmed and fear of falling was found a central theme. A step-wise multivariate regression found three variables that together explained 32.3% of the variance in the perception of elders concerning the contribution of home adaptations to safer functioning in the home. Their cognitive functioning as indicated by the practical Kettle Test explained 16% of the variance ( $\beta=.330$ ,  $p=.021$ ), safe mobility explained 8.3% of the variance ( $\beta=.311$ ,  $p=.029$ ) and the answer to the summary question 'is the home adapted now?' explained another 8% of the variance ( $\beta=.283$ ,  $p=.041$ ). **Discussion and Conclusions:** Older adults, who had expressed in this study reported a fear of falling, reported using the adapted devices which contributed to their greater sense of safety while performing daily tasks. They also described an increase perception that their home is usable safely to their needs, in usability of their homes. The article discusses the difficulty and the meanstangible and emotional resources required for accepting adaptations. The integration of self-report questionnaires with detailed observations of the subjects performing tasks in their homes yielded important information and showed that the progressive occupational therapy's program ameliorated the participants' ambivalence towards using adapted devices.

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## The Contribution of Adaptations of Assistive Devices to Community Dwelling Older Adults

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**Key Words:** Attitudes towards assistive devices, Safer-Home, Fear of falling, Older adults

### Abstract

**Background:** Due to a rise in life expectancy, there is an increased number of community dwelling seniors living in homes that are not adapted to their disabilities, nor supportive of their active life style. The provision of home adaptations, including assistive technologies that promote independent living, is a significant part of occupational therapists' professional responsibility. Home adaptations are designed to increase accessibility and safety, to prevent falls, to increase functional independence and quality of life. However, many studies demonstrate that older adults experience difficulties when adopting technological and environmental adaptations. **Aim:** To evaluate the contribution of assistive devices and home adaptations for older adults. **Method:** Two hundred and fifty older adults participated in the program that provided them with consultation,