

# Relationships and Sexuality in Occupational Therapy - Occupational Therapy Group Intervention for Young Adults with Psychiatric Disorders: A Case Study

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## Abstract

The subject of relationships and sexuality are a frequent preoccupation of young adults (age: 18-30). Several studies indicate a connection between the existence of a meaningful intimate relationship and quality of life. For individuals with psychiatric disorders, establishing intimate relationships is a challenging task. Lack of opportunities and social stigma are some of the obstacles in meeting this goal. Additionally there is a tendency for staff to neglect legitimizing this need. At present, it is widely recognized that a satisfying intimate relationship provides emotional support, relieves loneliness, and symptoms of depression. An intimate relationship enhances self-esteem and contributes positively to the overall recovery process. Nevertheless, occupational therapists often overlook this critical aspect in practice and still debate whether the subject of sexuality is relevant for occupational therapy treatment. This article presents a group intervention for young adults between the ages of 18-30, conducted in “Almog” Rehabilitation Center. This group provided a unique opportunity to explore relationships and sexuality. The group was based on psycho-education and included sharing of experiences, relevant skill acquisition and education of the subject matter. The goal of the group was to legitimize relationships and to enhance feelings of competency necessary to pursue intimate relationships. Following the intervention, the participants emphasized the importance and success of the group experience. This group intervention is an example of a relatively novel approach to exploring relationships and sexuality in young adults with psychiatric disorders. Finally, the article presents possible intervention opportunities for occupational therapists.