Changes in experienced value of everyday occupations after nature-based vocational rehabilitation

Abstract

Objective: The aim of this study was to describe and assess changes in participants’ experiences of everyday occupations after nature-based vocational rehabilitation (NBVR), to assess changes regarding symptoms of severe stress and the rate of return to work and possible association with experiencing the occupational value of everyday occupations. Methods: The NBVR was carried out by a transdisciplinary rehabilitation team and took place in a specially designed rehabilitation garden. The study had a longitudinal and mixed-method approach. Data concerning experiences of everyday occupations (Oval-pd), self-assessed occupational competence (OSA-F), health status (EQ-VAS, SCI-93), and sense of coherence (SOC-13) were collected before and after the intervention, and a one-year follow-up was carried out regarding returning to work. Semi-structured interviews were performed 12 weeks after the intervention. Results: Significant changes were measured regarding perceived occupational values in daily life, symptoms of severe stress, and returning to work. Both the return to work rate and symptoms of severe stress were significantly associated with changed experience of everyday occupation. Conclusions: In the interviews, participants explained that they now had a slower pace of everyday life and that everyday occupations were more often related to nature and creativity. This could be interpreted as nature-based rehabilitation inducing changes through meaningful occupations in restorative environments, leading to a positive change in perceived values of everyday occupations.


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