

Discerning the Impact and Utility of an Auditory Hallucination Simulation Experience on Increasing Empathy in First Year Occupational Therapy Students

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Abstract:

Empathy towards clients with psychiatric disabilities is a vital affective skill which contributes to the artful provision of occupational therapy (OT) services. OT academicians acknowledge the objectives to establish and maintain empathy in OT students and the need to measure changes. The *Hearing Distressing Voices Simulation*, currently used in the OT in Mental Health course at Creighton, is a tool designed to increase empathy towards people with auditory hallucinations. Studies about this simulation show it improved clinical compassion among psychiatrists, (McCabe et al., 2016) and students in the fields of medicine (Bunn & Terpstra, 2009), pharmacy (Skoy et al., 2016), and nursing (Kuo, Lee, & Yin, 2016; Ward, 2015); however, previous research has not evaluated this tool among OT students.

The purpose of this project is to examine the simulation's effect on OT students' empathy levels, specifically to discern (a) the degree of clinical empathy among Occupational Therapy (OT) students towards clients with psychiatric disabilities before the simulation, and (b) the change in clinical empathy after students participate in the *Hearing Distressing Voices Simulation*. The investigators will utilize the study findings to determine further research activities on the topic of empathy and disseminate acquired knowledge with others.