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Critical Moments in the Transformation of Occupational Therapy Practice

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Introduction: This presentation will describe critical moments in occupational practice transformation, drawn from a critical participatory action research project undertaken in New Zealand. The project emerged as a response to concerns about the legitimacy of accepted practices with children and families, shared by eight occupational therapy co-researchers. **Aim:** The study aimed to investigate and influence how the co-researchers constructed and translated occupational theory and knowledge to inform occupational practice. The study also aimed to explore how participation in the project would enable and empower occupational therapists to realize the emancipatory potential of occupational science and practice in context. **Methods:** The project used a critical participatory action research methodology underpinned by transformative and communicative action. A transformative community was created to enable the co-researchers to engage in collective action to deconstruct and reconstruct the social realities of their practice. Critical dialogue and practice stories were collected as project information and analyzed reflectively. **Results:** Findings from the study determined five critical moments in the process of practice transformation, validation, exploration, negotiation, integration and actions for occupational practice. These moments, which contributed to the development of the VENIA model, provide a series of strategies that will enable therapists to reconnect practice with occupational knowledge, within the practice context and through a transformative community. The model emerged from actions and understandings shared by the co-researchers in their experience of the emancipatory reconstruction of the social realities of occupational practice in context. **Conclusion:** The development of the VENIA model offers a praxiological solution to supporting occupational therapists to become occupation-based practitioners, advancing an occupational vision and agenda. The inclusion of a critical emancipatory perspective in the research and the inquiry suggests also that the discovery and resolution of oppressive and unjust social constraints has the power and potential to sustain occupational practice in context.