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Identifying Barriers and Facilitators within the Occupation of Voting for People with Disabilities

Amanda Fuller
Grand Valley State University

Jenna Kruis
Grand Valley State University

Victoria Pruess
Grand Valley State University

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Title: Identifying Barriers and Facilitators within the Occupation of Voting for People with Disabilities
Authors: Amanda Fuller, Jenna Krus, & Victoria Pruess

Abstract

Background. Research shows that people with disabilities vote at a significantly lower rate than those without disabilities (Matsubayashi & Ueda, 2014), demonstrating that this population faces occupational injustice in political activities (Stadnyk, Townsend, & Wilcock, 2010).

Purpose. This study explored the barriers and facilitators experienced by people with disabilities when they engage in political activities.

Method. A program evaluation of a United States Midwest metropolitan city was implemented to explore experiences of people with disabilities when voting. Semi-structured interviews with this population were completed and analyzed using thematic analysis strategies.

Findings. Several barriers exist in this city's voting process that limit participation in political activities for people with disabilities. The overarching themes of education, motivation, and accessibility emerged, with several sub-themes in each.

Implications. There is a need to widen occupational therapy's scope of practice to include political activities. This profession is well suited to work alongside people with disabilities to address the issues found. Further research is needed to explore this concept in wider regions with an occupational therapy perspective.