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Creative activities: an important agent of change in the process of rebuilding identity

○Bodil Winther Hansen (Senior lecturer), Anne-Le Morville (Senior Lecturer)
Dept. Occupational Therapy, Metropolitan University College, Copenhagen, Denmark

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Introduction Looking back on the history of occupational therapy, creative activities played a major part in the rehabilitation process, but have been diminished during the last decades. This review looks at the importance and application of creative activities in occupational therapy in the 21st century. **Objectives** The aim of the review was to describe the value and importance of focusing on creative activities in occupational therapy intervention. **Method** This scoping review was done as prequel to a book on creativity in occupational therapy, and based on literature search in the databases PubMed, Cinahl, PsychInfo, and the Danish library index. Our inclusion criteria were literature that covered the value and meaning of creative activity in general and/or application of creative activities as intervention tool. Peer-reviewed articles, articles and books in English, and Scandinavian languages were included. **Results/Discussion** This review showed that use of creative activities as a medium for healing/alleviating suffering have the power to rebuild or replace an identity during illness or major life crisis. The value of creative activities is individual and culture-based and as most have the need to express themselves through creativity, which makes creative activities important and useful. **Conclusion** Results indicated that individuals have a need to be seen as unique and creative beings. This knowledge supports that creative activity as an agent of change within the rehabilitation process is important, when adapting a new activity identity. The value and meaning of the creative activity for the individual or group should be examined before and during therapy. **Contribution to occupational therapy practice** Focusing on implementing creative activities is important as they have potential to replace former crucial activities to a person's activity identity. Creative activities are relevant in societies with stress, search for identity as a tool to understand individual reactions and feelings.