Wellbeing and Occupational Engagement

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Abstract— **Morris [1] has developed a new occupational therapy/occupational science theoretical framework about occupational engagement which we want to turn into an app. The theory looks at the activities people do on a daily basis and considers the relationship between the personal value we attribute to them and the consequences of taking part in that activity.**

Keywords – Wellbeing, occupational engagement, interactivity, self management.

I. OVERVIEW

In this extended abstract paper we describe the occupational engagement theory and outline a proposed application to enable individuals to manage their own wellbeing.

In summary:

- Occupational engagement is positioned within a framework of personal value and perceived consequences to participation.

- Occupational engagement is the participation in an occupation with current positive personal value attached to it.

- Engaging occupations require more involvement than those that just interest the individual, but not as much as absorbing occupations.

- Occupational engagement is a fluctuating state influenced by complex and multiple internal and external factors.

- The person will perceive positive or negative consequences to participation which may change over time in response to feedback from social, cultural and physical environments.

- Many internal and external factors impact on occupational engagement e.g. health and environmental factors.
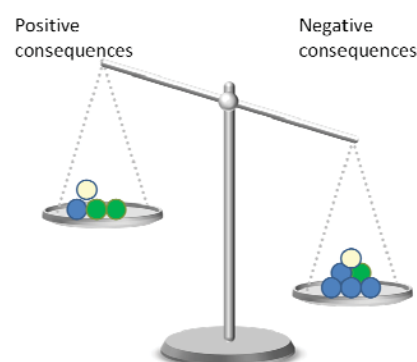

Fig.1. An illustration of the interactive relationship between value and consequence

The framework is currently illustrated through a set of scales (see Figure 1) to demonstrate this interactive relationship between value and consequence (each sphere represents an activity with positive, neutral or negative value). A positive sense of wellbeing is achieved by having most occupations with both positive value and consequences for the person and the society within which they live.

II. PROPOSED APP

We want to develop an interactive app which would help people understand this fluctuating relationship between how they feel about what they do and the consequences of doing it. The aim of this app would be to help people make decisions which are positive for their wellbeing. We envisage this being achieved through activities such as quizzes and a diary looking at how people spend their time.

The plan is to develop an app working in partnership with a technical group which would then be promoted and piloted by the University of Cumbria.

Fig.2. Positive values associated with a party

An example to illustrate the theory is illustrated above (Fig. 2).

If we think about attending a party as an example, there are a range of values which people may attach to this occupation. These values may be positive (as shown in Fig. 2) or negative. Taking part in any occupation also has consequences. Again this can be positive or negative. A sense of wellbeing is achieved if both the value and consequence are positive:

- Someone many not particularly want to attend a work party as they do not particularly like the people they work with, so do not value spending time with them. However, not attending the party would upset their boss who may then hold this against them (negative value, but positive consequences).

- This person attends a party with their close friends who they have not seen for a while. At this party they have too much to drink and they feel ill in the morning at work when they have an important meeting (positive value, negative consequences).

- The next time the person attends a party with their friends, they drink a little less. As a consequence, they do not feel ill the next morning and do not get into trouble at work as they are able to perform at their best during the important meeting (positive value and positive consequence).

III. REFERENCES

[1] Morris, K (2012) 'Occupational engagement in a regional secure unit'. Unpublished PhD thesis. Lancaster University: Lancaster.