

4-16-2022

## Supporting the Transition Out of the Family Caregiver Role: An Occupation-Centered Approach

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### Recommended Citation

Wilbanks, W., & MacDermott, S. (2022, April 16). Supporting the Transition Out of the Family Caregiver Role: An Occupation-Centered Approach. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstones-spring2022/9>

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# Supporting the Transition Out of the Family Caregiver Role

Whitney Wilbanks, OTS; Susan MacDermott, OTD, OTR/L

## BACKGROUND

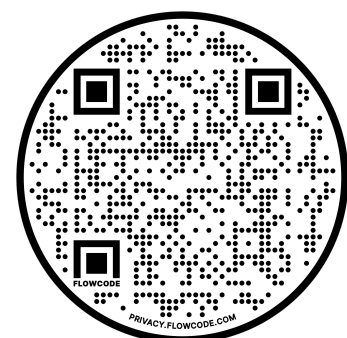
- Shifts in family caregivers' performance patterns often occur following the death of the care recipient (Dahdah & Joaquim, 2018).
- Many former caregivers face uncertainty about how to proceed with life after losing their loved one and caregiving role (Corey & McCurry, 2018).
- Meaningful occupational engagement can promote post-loss growth and healing following the loss of a loved one (Pickens, 2011).

## PROBLEM

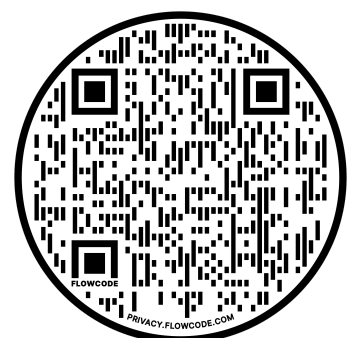
There is a gap in current research that supports the use of meaningful occupations to help family caregivers reconstruct their performance patterns when transitioning out of the family caregiver role.

## PURPOSE

- **To educate on ways to support family caregivers with adaptation to shifts in occupational participation.**
- **To advocate for the role of occupational therapy in end-of-life care.**



References



Resources

## OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the role of occupational therapy in supporting the transition out of the family caregiver role.
2. Identify the occupational needs of family caregivers after caregiving ends.
3. Recognize shifts in occupational participation that occur before and after the death of care recipient.
4. Create educational resources on the use of occupation-centered interventions to support family caregivers with adapting to shifts in performance patterns.

## METHODS

### Setting:

- VITAS Healthcare in San Diego, CA

### Participants:

- End-of-life care providers
- Current and former family caregivers

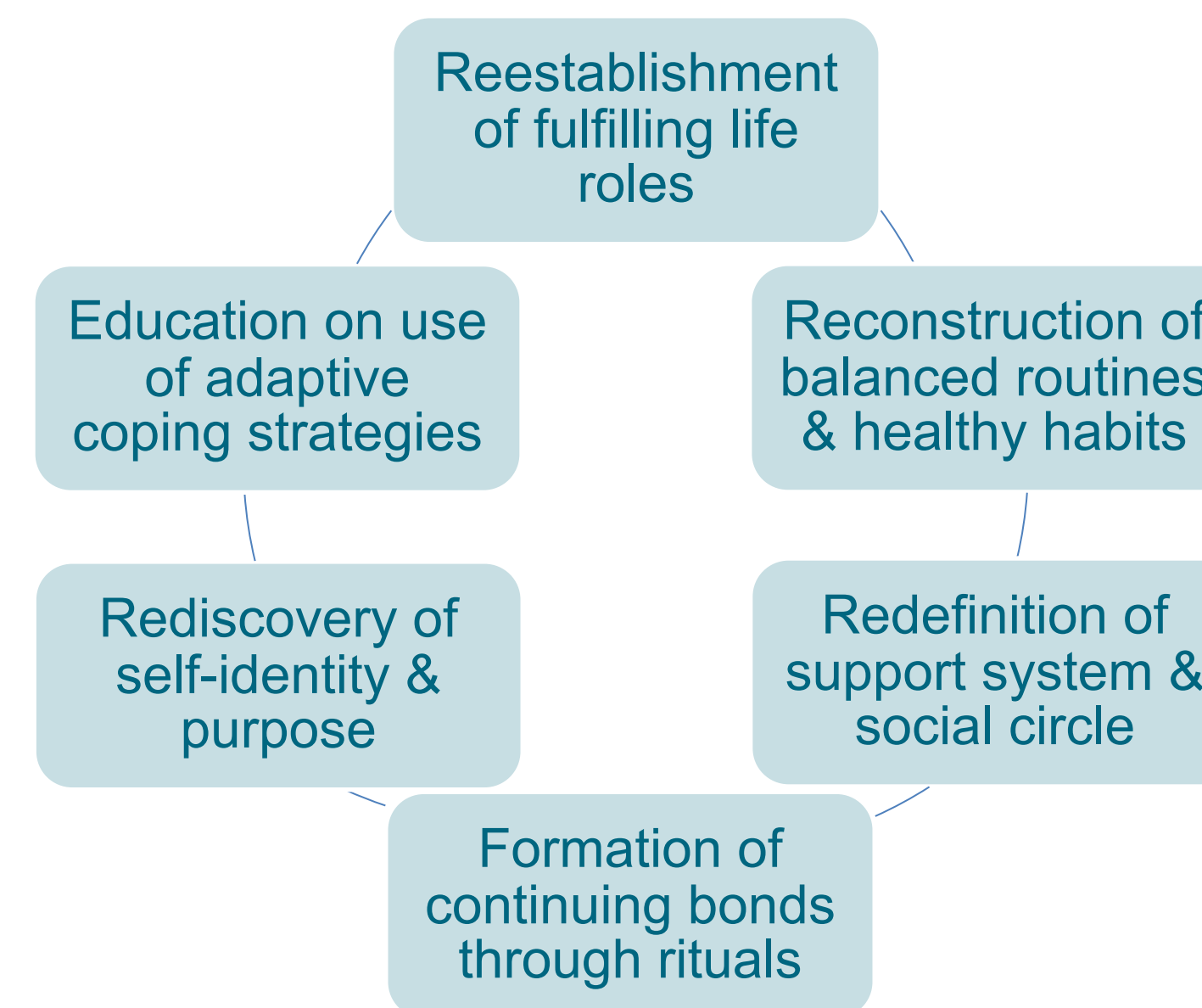
### Theoretical Frameworks

1. Canadian Model of Occupational Performance & Engagement
2. Model of Human Occupation

### Needs Assessment:

- Literature review of current research
- Phone & video interviews with end-of-life care providers
- VITAS Healthcare services providers survey
- Current & former caregiver questionnaires
- Attendance of bereavement support group meetings

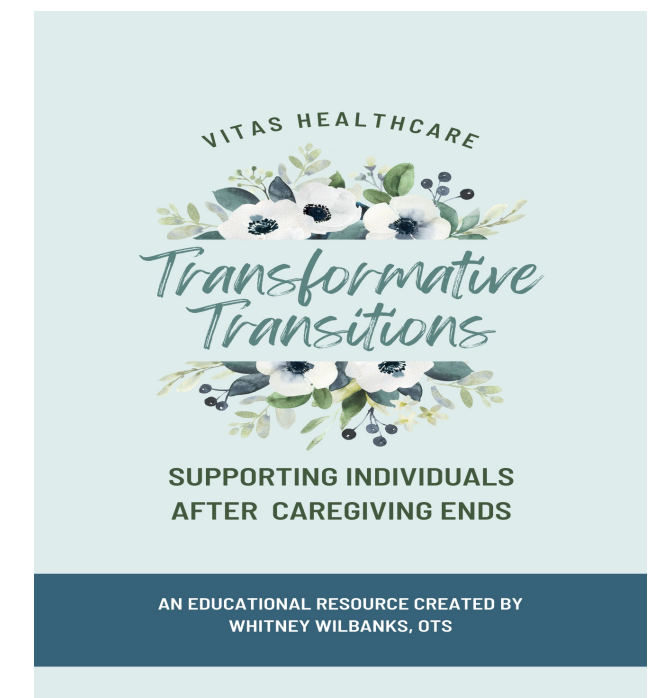
## RESULTS



- 70% of hospice care staff believe that family caregivers want more support with adapting to shifts in their everyday lives.
- Less than 30% of hospice care staff “often” or “always” address changes in roles, routines, habits, and rituals
- Identified barriers: time restraints & reluctance of family caregivers to accept help.

### Resources Provided:

1. Current & Former Family Caregiver Questionnaires
2. Family Caregiver & Bereavement Support Group Lists
3. Infographic, fact sheet, and position statement on the role of occupational therapy in end-of-life care
4. “Transformative Transitions: Supporting Individuals After Caregiving Ends” educational resource
5. Presentation on capstone project during monthly social workers & chaplains meeting



## DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

- An occupation-centered approach should be utilized by end-of-life care providers to support family caregivers with making adaptations to their roles, routines, habits, and rituals.
- More occupational therapists need to support family caregivers with transitioning out of the family caregiver role.
- It is imperative to continue to advocate for the value of occupational therapy in end-of-life care settings in order to increase awareness and utilization of services.

Special thanks to Julie Groves, OTR/L & VITAS Healthcare for their support.