

## Building the Foundation:

### Community Integration through Life Skills Interventions for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

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**PICO:** What impact do **life skills intervention** programs have on the **promotion of community reintegration** for individuals experiencing **homelessness**?

#### Methods:

- Databases: PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus, ASSIA (Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts)
- Search terms:
  - **P:** homeless adults, homeless individuals, homeless\*, homelessness, displaced, vulnerable, at-risk, high-risk
  - **I:** community, group interventions, self-advocacy, life skills training, self-care, sexual health, health promotion, health education, activities of daily living, instrumental activities of daily living, self-efficacy, independent living skills, home management, self-sufficiency
  - **C:** None
  - **O:** community participation, Community integration, community re-integration, community living, reintegration, integration
- Eligible articles reviewed by two authors using qualitative and quantitative review forms (Law et al., 1998; Letts et al, 2007)
- All critically reviewed articles unanimously agreed upon for inclusion by all authors
- 526 articles found; 139 full-text articles screened for eligibility; 10 articles included for systematic review

#### Results:

Theme	Strength of evidence	Areas addressed
<b>Health management</b> <sup>6, 7, 18, 19, 20, 21</sup>	Moderate	Substance use, safe sex, self-management, health outcomes, health protection/physical safety, healthy behaviors
<b>Home management</b> <sup>6, 7, 8, 9</sup>	Limited	Room care, “taking care of place where I live”
<b>Social participation</b> <sup>6, 17, 20, 22</sup>	Moderate	Prosocial behaviors, social connectedness, increased feeling of belonging to a group, “expressing myself to others,” and “people who support and encourage me”
<b>Psychological health</b> <sup>17, 18, 21</sup>	Moderate	Psychological symptoms (i.e. depression), self-esteem/self-efficacy, psychological capital and health
<b>Money management</b> <sup>6, 7, 8</sup>	Limited	Money management strategies, “managing finances”

#### Implications:

- **Practice:** Results of this study suggest that occupational therapy services can provide benefits complimentary to the provision of housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. Included studies support client-centered life skill interventions as a means to increase self-esteem and self-efficacy, and promote feelings of social inclusion.
- **Education:** Fieldwork and/or OTD residencies in this practice area would open up more opportunities serve this population, and allow OTs to pioneer work in nontraditional settings.
- **Research:** Further research should explore more comprehensive and standardized ways to measure community integration, as well as expanding the body of research available on detailed interventions currently in use with the homeless population in order to increase clinical application of studies.

If you have any questions, please contact us directly:

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(titles in bold were included in systematic review)

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