

# Crafting Shared Values: Sustaining a Community Doing Pottery Together

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## Introduction

- Pottery and other crafts have historically played an important role in occupational therapy (OT).
- Pottery is often done in group settings due to resource intensive nature of kilns.
- However, there has been no research exploring the nature of the community formed when pottery is done in a group setting.
- Part of a larger pattern within OS/OT literature: little work has been done to explore collective occupations from group-level perspective.
- **Research aim:** Describe the community formed when pottery is created in a group setting

## Methods

- **Design:** Qualitative, descriptive study with ethnographic elements; purposeful sampling based on key informant
- **Participants:** 4 individuals from a pottery studio at a large university in the southeast US
- **Data collection:** focus group, participant observation
- **Data analysis:** thematic analysis

## Results

**Shared values** informed *how* this community does pottery together

### Openness and embracing difference

*"You're really in this community of different skills, different expertise, different walks of life."*

### Being supportive

*"The opportunity for me to share experiences or share a skill or an insight to somebody new also helps to develop that sense of belonging. You feel like you're connected to the place and that you're passing it down."*

### Being respectful and conscientious

*"I think it's really hard for someone to go rogue [group laughter of agreement], and I think that there's enough people that if someone did go rogue, there would be individuals that would step in and say something."*

## Discussion

- Shared values helped to sustain this community
- Values guided community behavior, and these actions in turn reinforced these social norms.
- Multidirectional interplay aligns with a transactional perspective on occupation. (Dickie et al., 2006)
- Angell (2014) and Laliberte-Rudman (2013) have studied relationships between occupation and broader cultural norms.
- This study suggests similar processes can also occur on the meso-scale in communities engaged in collective occupations.

## Implications for OT

- When assessing fit between client, environment, and occupation, it is important to consider the client's values and social context.

### References

- Angell, A. M. (2014). Occupation-centered analysis of social difference: Contributions to a socially responsive occupational science. *J. of Occupational Science*, 21(2), 104-116.
- Dickie, V., Cutchin, M. P., & Humphry, R. (2006). Occupation as transactional experience: A critique of individualism in occupational science. *J. of Occupational Science*, 13(1), 83-93.
- Laliberte-Rudman, D. (2013). Enacting the critical potential of occupational science: Problematizing the 'individualizing of occupation', *J. of Occupational Science*, 20(4), 298-313.