

Original Article

# Meanings about everyday life produced by occupational therapy students during the COVID-19 pandemic

*Sentidos produzidos acerca do cotidiano por estudantes de terapia ocupacional durante a pandemia de COVID-19*

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## Abstract

This study aims to understand how students reflected on their daily lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the knowledge gained from graduation in occupational therapy. The study sample consisted of 235 occupational therapy undergraduate students from different periods of the course, from different higher education institutions located from North to South of the country. Data were collected by applying an on-line form (Google Forms) using the Questionnaire of Academic Experiences in Occupational Therapy (QUESVATO) elaborated by the authors of this study. Qualitative data were analyzed using the IRaMuTeQ software (*Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires*). The lexical classes resulting from the analysis received the following nominations: class 1: Attention to family members; class 2: Believing in Occupational Therapy; class 3: Adapting and organizing everyday life; class 4: Certainties and experiences; and class 5: Interruption of everyday life and mental health. It was possible to follow different forms of appropriation of the concept by the participants: applying it in possible interventions in the everyday lives of others; through a practical approach, where theory enables a process of criticism and evaluation to transform everyday life; through a pragmatic approach, where the immediate transition from reading the situation to acting on it is made; as a safe way of analyzing the context full of uncertainties and changes that we are experiencing in contemporary times; changes and interruptions in everyday life stand out as aspects/issues that have negative effects on people's mental health.

**Keywords:** Occupational Therapy, Teaching, Mental Health, Students, COVID-19.

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## Resumo

Este estudo visa compreender como estudantes refletem sobre o cotidiano vivido durante a pandemia de COVID-19 considerando os conhecimentos advindos da graduação em terapia ocupacional. A amostra do estudo foi composta por 235 estudantes de graduação em terapia ocupacional de diferentes períodos do curso, de diferentes instituições de ensino superior localizadas de norte a sul do país. Os dados foram coletados por meio de aplicação de formulário on-line (*Google Forms*) utilizando-se o Questionário de Vivências Acadêmicas em Terapia Ocupacional (QUESVATO) elaborado pelas autoras deste estudo. Os dados qualitativos foram analisados com auxílio do software *IRaMuTeQ (Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires)*. As classes lexicais resultantes da análise receberam as seguintes nomeações: classe 1: Atenção aos familiares; classe 2: Acreditar na terapia ocupacional; classe 3: Adaptando e organizando o dia a dia; classe 4: Certezas e vivências e classe 5: Interrupção do cotidiano e a saúde mental. Foi possível acompanhar diferentes formas de apropriação do conceito pelas participantes: aplicando-o em possíveis intervenções no cotidiano do outro; por meio de uma abordagem praxica, onde a teoria possibilita um processo de crítica e avaliação para transformar o cotidiano; através de uma abordagem pragmática, onde fazem a passagem imediata da leitura da situação para a ação; como forma segura de análise do contexto cheio de incertezas e mudanças que vivemos na contemporaneidade; mudanças e interrupções do cotidiano destacam-se como aspectos/questions que têm efeitos negativos na saúde mental das pessoas.

**Palavras-chave:** Terapia Ocupacional, Ensino, Saúde Mental, Estudante, COVID-19.

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a milestone in the change in people's everyday lives that has affected collective and individual lives. There are many transformations resulting from measures to prevent the spread of the virus that cause transformations in urban culture, introducing unprecedented elements into the daily life of cities, such as streets occupied by people wearing masks and checking body temperature as a prerequisite for entering some public spaces (Beiguelman, 2020).

These measures, especially those of social distancing, reflect on daily routines and habits, bringing greater homestay - for those who have this possibility, with changes in work and study activities, in addition to those in relationship patterns and affective exchanges. Along with the introduction of new elements - such as the use of a mask, alcohol gel and hygiene measures not always carried out before the pandemic - social isolation/distancing measures also bring the need to develop skills that are now required in some situations, such as cooking, cleaning the house and mastering technologies in remote work/study (Alzqueta et al., 2020). Piguet & Montebello (2020) highlight the importance of contrasting, multiple and unique experiences of the pandemic according to place, sex and age. For these authors, it is important to write a common history of the extraordinary, of the experiences of those who manage crises on a daily basis.

We are facing a moment in which the relationship between the common person and a universal situation is highlighted, where it is necessary to appropriate instruments and

products, customs and language to deal with events. At this moment, we are experiencing a pandemic situation that requires new ways of dealing with day-to-day activities that are interpreted and lived in different ways in the particularities of each individual's life, reflecting on actions that weave everyday life. It is important to highlight that the day-to-day crisis imposed by COVID-19 highlights social inequalities, especially in our country, where the poor classes face even more precarious situations of life and work at this time (Bregalda et al., 2020; Falcão et al., 2020).

Using Heller's concept of everyday life (1991) – a philosopher who brings contributions focused on the relations between the common life of common people and the vicissitudes of history, without losing the specificities of the actions involved in the fabric of everyday life (Patto, 1993) – we can say that, in this process, there is constitution and reproduction of individuals and of society itself through everyday life. Salles & Matsukura (2013, p. 268) point out that the concept of everyday life “is established in the relationship between the micro and the macro, it is built in the articulation between the zoom-in focused on the subject's life and the large eyepiece that captures the processes of social production.”

For Galheigo (2020, p. 8), by reading everyday life we can “know the ways of thinking, acting and feeling of individuals and groups; representations that make their experiences in the midst of the hegemonic ideology that creates institutions and results in the instrumentalization of daily life”. For this author, the producers of knowledge about everyday life reveal the fabric of life and present

(...) the hard layers of repetition and suffering in everyday life; they show the delicacy of affection and the enchantment of small gestures and actions; they make difference, discrimination, prejudice and injustice visible; and offer testimony to the possibilities of creation, reinvention, cooperation and transformation of oneself and the world (Galheigo, 2020, p. 8).

Considering that everyday life, the common life of the common person, is the center of the historical event, the very essence of social substance that is constructed individually and socially (Heller, 1991), with the eruption of a historical event such as the COVID-19 pandemic, there is tension of immediacy and plurality of meanings, but there is also promotion of new ways of dealing with the continuum of life (Rico & Plata, 2020). Thus, the pandemic and related factors, such as massive losses of human lives, social connections, financial stability, among others, impact people's everyday lives and bring deviations from the route that summon them to new constructions of everyday life, with changes in it and the need to deal with a certain unpredictability in relation to the future (Crepaldi et al., 2020).

Faced with the complexity of this pandemic, different professional categories have struggled to face this moment. Occupational therapy has participated in this process and, in different manifestations, has sought to contribute to the attention to the daily lives of individuals, as they are structured around COVID-19 (Malfitano et al., 2020; Silva, 2020).

In the various fields of professional activity, actions with new population demands, the organization of people with disabilities, the deinstitutionalization movement, the struggle for rights and social emancipation, fostered a closer look by occupational

therapists on people's daily lives (Drumond, 2007; Galheigo et al., 2018). For Galheigo (2020), everyday life is a key concept for the development of a critical perspective in occupational therapy in Brazil. The author explains that critical occupational therapy is the perspective that makes its practices emancipatory beyond what exists, which “seeks to understand and unveil alternatives for dealing with the concrete conditions of the daily life of subjects and groups to whom they dedicate their efforts and knowledge” (Galheigo, 2020, p. 12).

Thus, everyday life as a concept and category of analysis makes up the theoretical-practical field of occupational therapy in Brazil. A preliminar review of Pedagogical Course Projects<sup>1</sup> (PPC) courses in the country shows that the study of everyday life is part of the training of occupational therapists, being present as a curricular subject and/or as a syllabus of the subjects (Cid et al., 2015; Fiorati et al., 2021; Guarany et al., 2018; Leão et al., 2015).

Training is understood as a dialogue between the ideal and the real, that aims to achieve what is possible in actions, and that results in a process of transformation that takes place between the considered reality and the idealized model (Constantinidis & Cunha, 2013). It is believed that the pandemic and social distancing moment is a moment of excellence to analyze how these students equate the theory of everyday life through the reality of their own everyday lives and the everyday lives of other people with whom they have a relationship. In this sense, the objective of this study is to understand how occupational therapy students live the concept of everyday life in the real day-to-day existence, at the intersections with social relationships, with emotions and thoughts in the face of the pandemic and social distancing moment that crosses everyone's life. In other words, it aims to understand the subjective meanings produced by occupational therapy students in relation to knowledge about everyday life during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Method**

This is a non-experimental, cross-sectional, exploratory-descriptive study, with a convenience sample according to the voluntary participation of 235 occupational therapy students from different higher education institutions located from north to south of the country. The vast majority of those students (99.05%) come from a public Higher Education Institution (HEI) and only 0.05% from a private HEI. Regarding the training period in the course, 34.9% are in the initial periods (between the first and the third semester), 34% in the intermediate periods (between the fourth to the sixth semester) and 31% in the final periods (between the seventh and tenth semester) of study.

The sociodemographic characterization of the participants is presented in Table 1 according to sex, color, marital status and average household income.

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<sup>1</sup>Some courses use the name Pedagogical Political Project (PPP) for their projects.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic characterization of participants.

<b>Sociodemographic item</b>	<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Female	88.9
	Male	11.1
<b>Color</b>	White	63.8
	Black	12.8
	Mixed race (brown)	17.9
	Yellow	1.7
	Non-classified	3.8
	Single	79.6
<b>Marital status</b>	Married	7.2
	Shares house with partner	6.0
	Divorced	2.1
	Separated	1.7
	Others	3.4
	<1	7.2
<b>Average household income (in number of minimum wages)</b>	1-2	29.8
	2-3	22.6
	3-5	19.3
	5-8	6.8
	8-10	4.7
	>10	6.4
	Uninformed	3.0

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The procedures were initiated after approval of the project, under opinion No. 4.022.960, by the Research Ethics Council of the Health Sciences Center of the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES). All occupational therapy course coordinators, from north to south of the country, were contacted, as well as academic centers, to request assistance in disseminating the research among students.

Data collection took place through the application of an on-line form (Google Forms) composed of three questionnaires. The results of one of them were used in the present study. The access link to the form was sent to participants by employees via e-mail, WhatsApp or social networks. Data collection was carried out for two months, between October and December 2020. To answer the form, the participant filled out the informed consent form and was guaranteed anonymity and data confidentiality. The only inclusion criterion used was being an occupational therapy student.

The questionnaire used, Questionnaire of Academic Experiences in Occupational Therapy (QUESVATO), was developed by the authors of this study and evaluated and validated by researchers in the field of mental health. This instrument consists of single-response, multiple-choice or open-ended questions that address issues related to sex, color/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, in addition to questions related to social withdrawal, academic path in occupational therapy, positive and negative factors of remote teaching and the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of occupational therapy students.

To answer the objective of this study, in addition to the sociodemographic data provided by QUESVATO, data from the following open question were used: "The knowledge you have acquired in the course so far has made you understand or think about the changes in your daily life and in the people's daily lives in this period of pandemic/social isolation? Talk about it".

The qualitative data, resulting from the answers to the open question of QUESVATO, were analyzed with the help of the software IRaMuTeQ (*Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires*), which is a "free computer program that allows different forms of statistical analysis on textual corpus and on tables of individuals by words" (Camargo & Justo, 2013, p. 513). The textual material obtained through the open question was transcribed into a corpus and submitted to a Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC), an analysis performed by the IRaMuTeQ software, resulting in the construction of a dendrogram (Camargo & Justo, 2013) that informs, among other analyzes, the distribution of classes, classifying text segments according to their vocabularies. Furthermore, the software allows the text segments associated with each class to be retrieved from the original corpus.

## Results and Discussion

The corpus elaborated from the answers presented 6,647 occurrences with 1,013 words. The word "everyday" was the most frequent in the responses (n=87), followed by "person" (n=73), "routine" (n=63), "thinking" (n=39) and "shape and health" (n=38). The composition of these words indicates everyday life as central to this student's reading of the pandemic moment, as a point of attention for the production of health, in the care of the self and the other, as illustrated in one of her<sup>2</sup> answers:

*Yes, I believe that we are living an experience that many people we serve experience when facing disruptions in everyday life, as is happening now in this moment of pandemic. This made us think and called us to a reformulation of our everyday life, adaptation of our routine, our activities and the development of health maintenance mechanisms.*

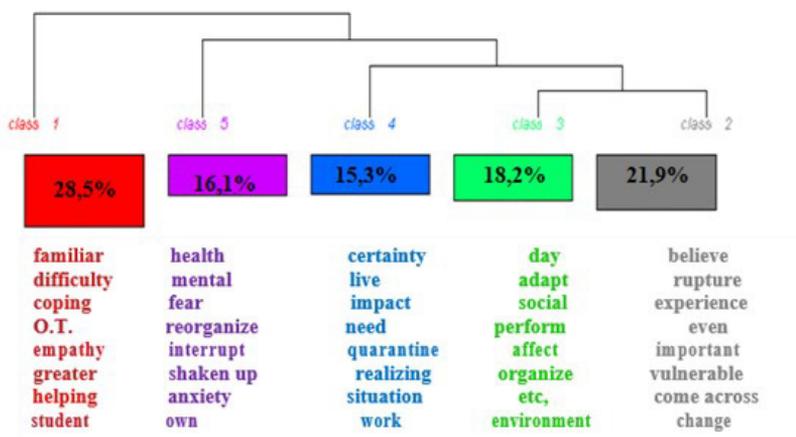
The DHC analysis of active words produced five lexical classes, which are shown in Figure 1.

The dendrogram shows that, at first, the corpus was divided (1<sup>st</sup> partition) into two subcorpus, with class 1 on one side and classes 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the other. Then, the first subcorpus was divided in two (2<sup>nd</sup> partition), with class 5 on one side, and classes 2, 3 and 4 on the other. In a third moment, the second subcorpus was divided in two (3<sup>rd</sup> partition), class 4 on one side and classes 2 and 3 on the other. Finally, the third subcorpus was divided into two (4<sup>th</sup> partition), class 2 on one side and class 3 on the other.

The lexical classes received the following nominations: class 1: Attention to family members; class 2: Believing in Occupational Therapy; class 3: Adapting and organizing everyday life; class 4: Certainties and experiences, and class 5: Interruption of everyday

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<sup>2</sup>The Occupational Therapy course has a predominance of women among its group of students, with 90% of them being female (Brasil, 2004), so it was decided to adopt the female gender in the writing of the article.



**Figure 1.** Dendrogram of the five lexical classes obtained from the descending hierarchical classification (DHC).

life and mental health. The names of the classes were subjectively elaborated by the researchers based on the composition of the predominant words, seeking to represent the ideas of each class (Carvalho et al., 2020). Each class will be analyzed separately, as shown below.

### Attention to family members

Class 1 brings the words *familiar*, *difficulty*, *coping*, *OT* (which corresponds to the abbreviation for Occupational Therapy), *empathy* and *greater*. This class is the most representative, it stands out from the others in the first partition and accounts for 28.47% of the text segments. This class is opposed to the others, showing attention towards the other in contrast to other classes that show the students' attention towards themselves, their feelings and emotions.

Class 1 indicates that the knowledge acquired in the occupational therapy course adds quality to the care provided to their family and friends in the face of the difficulties faced by the disruption of daily life arising from the prevention measures of COVID-19, as exemplified by the following text segment:

Yes, I noticed a change in the way I looked at how I could help my family members in their daily difficulties within the limitations that the pandemic caused, such as helping my grandparents, who missed seeing their friends and had a feeling of uselessness.

At times, the home environment is used as a “practice scenario” by the students. In this process, welcoming needs and caring arouse reflections not only on the daily life of the other and their own, but also on the therapist's place, putting empathy into practice:

It made me look at others with empathy and assurance. It is a unique moment that changes habits and customs, which modifies the entire context in which we are inserted.

According to Kestenberg et al. (2006), a care relationship presupposes attention, empathy, active listening and security, which are technical-scientific knowledge acquired in professional training. Empathy is situated, in its affective dimension, as the

ability to put oneself in the other person's place in order to seek the other person's experiences and feelings, to identify with the one who suffers (Moreto & Blasco, 2012). A literature review carried out by Carmo et al. (2020) points out the positive effects of empathy and humanization in various aspects of the personal and professional lives of health students. For the authors, the application of empathy and humanization in the daily routine of students is fundamental for professional performance, in the professional's relationship with people who seek care.

However, in this solitary experience, in a domestic territory, without the support of teachers and colleagues, as it would be in the field of practical learning, putting into practice the acquired knowledge is not always successful, as evidenced in the following text segments:

*We have a greater sense of organizing a healthy routine. A little at first, I beat myself up a lot of for not keeping my routine. The family stress made me discouraged, because I will work with people and I cannot even deal with my relatives.*

*Home saint does not work miracles. As much as I tried to plan, for myself and my family, a routine and implementation of substitute activities, I could not.*

According to Moreto & Blasco (2012), the development of empathy involves the student's own emotions, which can be manifested through inadequate emotional response, when she perceives her own vulnerability in the face of the situation, generating fear, anxiety and a feeling of powerlessness. In this sense, we are facing students who are dealing with the pandemic moment, in an environment where feelings and experiences are mixed with the experiences of family members, where identification with them can prevent the technical/professional/therapeutic relationship. It is important to highlight, in these times of remote, non-face-to-face courses, the importance of academic support so that students can deal with this type of issue, which can generate frustration and anxiety among them.

### **Believing in Occupational Therapy**

Class 2, named "Believing in Occupational Therapy", is represented by the words *believe, rupture, experience, even, important* and corresponds to 21.9% of the text segments. As part of the last partition, this class is tangent to and closely related to the other classes.

The words of this class are linked to the credit given by the students to the object of study and professional practice linked to occupational therapy, that is, human and daily activity. They recognize a field of knowledge that gives meaning and/or contributes to improving everyday life at a time of pandemic and social distancing, as shown in the following examples:

*I believe that, with the knowledge of the Occupational Therapy course, I was able to understand even better our relationship with the body, with the others and with human activities in this period of isolation.*

*I believe that occupational therapy, in times of social isolation, can play an important role as a mediator and enhancer in the resignification of people's daily lives, since it can contribute to the various areas that encompass human activities and relationships.*

The text segment presented below suggests that belief in occupational therapy goes beyond assumptions supported by theoretical knowledge. The knowledge of occupational therapy is also based on the students' own daily experiences, who, from the pandemic moment, bring to their realities the experience of changes in the way of living everyday life - which is called by them a rupture of daily life - until then seen as an event in the lives of people assisted by occupational therapy:

*I believe that we are experiencing what many people we serve experience when they face disruptions in their daily lives, as is happening right now, in this moment of a pandemic, which has called us to reformulate our everyday lives, adapt our activities and develop health maintenance mechanisms.*

For these students, theory about everyday life was not “simply in the wake of practice” (Ramos, 2010, p. 206), not just verification and confirmation of facts, but also a practical function of transforming reality.

According to Ramos (2010, p. 206), “the transforming activity in the context of reality depends on the activity carried out in the context of theory”, that is, the context is examined in its components, reordered in their relationships that configure reality. Thus, the process of understanding reality, everyday life and its ruptures, from the COVID-19 pandemic and the movement to transform it, was facilitated by its theoretical appropriation, by the knowledge from occupational therapy, enabling a process of criticism, interpretation and evaluation of the facts and the return to them with proposals for “reformulation of everyday life” and/or “resignification of everyday life”, according to the reports.

### **Adapting and organizing everyday life**

Class 3 brings the words *day, adapt, social, perform, affect and organize*, corresponds to 18.2% of the text segments and, like Class 2, is part of the last partition, tangency and is closely related to the others classes. However, it is opposed to Class 2 in the partition. While Class 2 shows a theoretical understanding of daily life, which turns to reality, in Class 3, the words indicate the students' mention of practical actions to organize their own daily lives, supported by occupational therapy, as illustrated by the text segments:

*It allows us to think about some strategies for organizing our routine and the meanings of our daily lives. It made me think a lot and look for possible ways to reduce losses and adapt my routine to the new everyday life.*

*In my routine, I was able to identify the moments that I produced best and organize my day so that I could accomplish everything I needed to do. Mainly in*

*relation to the importance of organizing the daily routine to develop different occupational roles.*

*At this moment, we are living in, I am managing to organize my routine, maximise my time performing activities and organize thought for this new moment.*

While Class 2 brings a perspective of knowledge through praxis, where theory is fundamental in transforming reality, in Class 3 the perspective is practical, that is, “there is an immediate unity of thought and action” (Patto, 1993, p. 126), which is typical of everyday activities, which are also pragmatic (Patto, 1993).

Routine organization, day-to-day organization and adaptation to the new routine, different roles, are elements present in the text segments and that go in the direction of everyday life in the perspective of Heller (1991), for whom everyday life is the place of routine, spontaneity, habits, automatic role-playing, a place where the world is apprehended and objectified in it.

Salles & Matsukura (2013), when analyzing the bibliographic production on daily life by occupational therapists, point out that the concept of daily life serves as a reflection of the organization of people's lives. For these authors, what matters for occupational therapy is what people do and how the social context facilitates or hinders their engagement in different activities. In addition, the onset of a disease generates the need for daily activities that prioritize treatment. For these authors, everyday life is a central element in the analysis of the influence of the social context in the transformation of people's lives, making it possible to identify the consequences that occur from this transformation. Related to the present study, the daily life of the participants, as well as that of all people, is subject to changes imposed by COVID-19, whose prevention is prioritized at this time. Using the line of thought of these authors, we have as a premise that the analysis of the organization, adaptation and performance of activities in the necessary transformation of the daily life of these students, would bring us data about their life context and the impacts from these transformations. Thus, the importance of new research that analyzes the changes/adaptations that occurred in the daily lives of these students, as mentioned in this topic, is indicated, so that the impact of COVID-19 on their lives is known. Impacts that can generate illness, as mentioned in the segment below:

In this pandemic period, it became clear how complex the structuring of a new routine is, the difficulty of adapting to a new social context, and how this difficulty, added to other personal and environmental factors, can promote illness.

This segment denotes that being a student of occupational therapy does not always guarantee the recognition of difficulties, impossibilities, weaknesses and/or the need to adapt in carrying out daily activities or creating a new daily life in the face of the impositions of reality. In addition, it highlights the importance of considering, in the approach to everyday life, the individual in their complexity, that is, as explained by Galheigo (2020), the processes experienced by individuals must be analyzed in the midst of the socio-historical conjuncture, with its contradictions, and considering the uniqueness of life experience.

## Certainties and experiences

Class 4, represented by 15.3% of the text segments, is part of the third partition, along with Classes 2 and 3, but is opposed to them. It is represented by the words *certainty, live, impact, need, quarantine*.

The segments of this class refer to the security of knowledge about daily life applied to experiences at the time of a pandemic, according to the following reports:

*Of course, we studied routine and everyday life and, since the beginning of the pandemic, I was able to see in my family and myself the impacts of the change in our routine.*

*For sure, because in addition to understanding why people are so impacted by the interruption of everyday life, for understanding all this, it also made me think about the impacts on my daily life.*

If in Class 2 appears believing, to give credit to the knowledge of occupational therapy, Class 3 presents the certainty, the security that such knowledge offers of its truth. However, it is important to emphasize that, as Sandoval (2014, p. 182) points out, “certainty is restrictive and illusory; of few things one can have sufficient security to which one can arrogate a certain knowledge”.

The certainty pointed out by the students concerns the reading of the impacts caused by the pandemic moment in everyday life. Certainty, for these students, arises in the midst of so many uncertainties, such as those we live in the current moment of a pandemic; Furthermore, as Bauman (2001) states, contemporary problems can be summarized in the triplet insecurity, uncertainty and lack of guarantee.

Thus, this certainty brings encouragement at this moment:

*Probably without this prior knowledge about what is everyday life, its construction and its importance for individuals, it would be more difficult for me than it was to live in this conjuncture. [I was able to] understand my needs and better address them, how to start getting involved in possible activities.*

It is important to highlight that the experiences mentioned in the text segments are not limited to the students' particular experiences, but also bring what Heller (1991) called the overcoming of everyday life, that is, as Guimarães (2002, p. 19) explains: “it is a daily life that has to extrapolate its particularity, its umbilicality, its centrality”. Overcoming everyday life presupposes that the activities performed by the subject are related to the “generic human”, to the human species. To lose the human-generic dimension is to alienate oneself, and the fundamental element for this process is human consciousness (Guimarães, 2002). As an example, in the following segment, we observe that the human-generic dimension is not lost sight:

*Poor people are not in quarantine due to the essence of the demand for work, the spaces that this population lives in, how they move, what the workplaces are like and others. These were my first, and so far, my main concerns.*

In addition, these students understand that the pandemic brought an awareness of people who lived within the scope of particularity, automatism, from the disruption of everyday life, changing the way the subject gives meaning to their own life:

*The structuring of occupations, of daily activities, were extremely harmed in this quarantine and, in general, people who lived on automatic or only lived for work, which is the case of most people I know, had a very big disruption that destabilized the way of seeing the meaning of their lives.*

The imposed changes can highlight a certain dependence on routine and/or habits. Guimarães (2002) draws attention to “everyday slaves”, that is, people subtly tied to types of dependence, often unconsciously. For Heller (1982, p. 190), “we must develop generalizable ways of life”, that is, seek diversity in what we do.

### **Interruption of everyday life and mental health**

Class 5 totals 16.1% of the text segments and is represented by the words *health, mental, fear, reorganize, interrupt, shaken up* and *anxiety*. It is part of the second partition, on the opposite side of classes 2, 3 and 4, which, as discussed so far, concerns the relationship of students with knowledge about everyday life and the practical perspective of everyday life, built in the occupational therapy course.

It is about the students' understanding of the impacts of the change in daily life, imposed by the pandemic, on people's mental health. Social distancing/isolation and/or fear of contamination and death have imprinted changes in people's daily lives. These changes can be experienced as an interruption that demands a reorganization that can result in psychic suffering.

*The unstructured everyday life opens deep cracks in our mental health, even more so if there is already a previous suffering. That is the importance of strong bases, support networks, bonds of affection and everything we have talked about so far.*

Faced with this, everyone's everyday life has suddenly changed, bringing anguish, quirks and anxiety. Many people had to interrupt their main occupations (work, college, internship) and reorganize their everyday life to carry out new activities inside their homes.

In this way, according to occupational therapy students, the impacts brought by COVID-19 on daily life harm mental health. This premise of the participants of this study is in line with Lima (2020), who highlights that social distancing has been affecting collective or individual life, with repercussions on the mental health of the population, and that the number of people psychologically affected, which may have psychological or psychiatric consequences, is usually greater than that of people affected by the infection.

In conclusion, the students made use of the knowledge of everyday life, built in the occupational therapy course, according to various perspectives. The first presented was the one in which they appropriate knowledge about everyday life and apply it to deal with everyday difficulties of the other, family members and/or close people. The appropriation of this knowledge leads them to use the domestic

space as a space for practice - an experience not always successful given the complexity of relationships and the lack of didactic follow-up.

For Ramos (2010), the subjectivation of knowledge is the result of experiences that, as a result, can generate pragmatic behaviors (utilitarian practice) or integrated with the conceptual apprehension of reality, producing knowledge through the understanding of the theory-practice relationship. In this sense, the participants approach and apply the concept of daily life in their own experiences, either through theoretical appropriation, resulting in criticism, evaluation or reformulating and adapting daily life, or in a more direct and immediate way, moving from thought to action, to adaptation of everyday life. In this way, they show types of approach that could be classified, the first as an approach through praxis and the second in a pragmatic way.

The students use the concepts of everyday life and the knowledge acquired in the occupational therapy course as a reference for understanding the uncertainties posed by the pandemic situation. Knowledge allows them to make some possible reading in the face of radical changes in people's daily lives, where fear and insecurity accompany them. In this sense, they feel guided by the concepts, which give them security and encouragement at this moment.

Finally, they relate the daily changes imposed by the pandemic moment to psychic suffering, to harmful damage to people's mental health. In this way, they bring psychic suffering as an impact of the interruption of daily life.

## **Final Considerations**

This study discussed the subjective productions of students of occupational therapy courses regarding the concept of everyday life in the context of social isolation during a pandemic period. In this way, it was possible to follow different ways of appropriating the concept: applying it in possible interventions in the daily life of the other; through a practical approach, where theory enables a process of criticism and evaluation to transform everyday life; through a pragmatic approach, where they make the immediate transition from reading the situation to action; as a safe way of analyzing the context full of uncertainties and changes that we are experiencing in contemporary times; changes and interruptions in daily life stand out as aspects/issues that have negative effects on people's mental health.

It was possible to understand that the students are frustrated and anxious in the face of changes in their daily lives, with the experience in a restricted environment at home, with family members. The knowledge acquired about daily life brings security at times, especially in reading the context, but it brings difficulties when dealing with the closest reality, such as the relationship with family members. We emphasize the importance of new research that analyzes the changes/adaptations that occurred in the daily lives of these students so that the impact of COVID-19 on their lives is known.

As a limitation of this study, the data collection carried out through self-reported information provided by the students is pointed out, and there may be the occurrence of bias due to the interpretation of the questions by the participants.

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#### Author's Contributions

Teresinha Cid Constantinidis worked on the conception, writing of the text, organization of sources, analysis and discussion of the results. Thelma Simões Matsukura worked on the conception, writing of the text,

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