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Journal Entry #: The Theory of Planned Behavior in OT Education and Practice

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The theory of planned behavior is broken up into three influential components relating to behavior and intention. First, attitudes are best described as “the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question” (Ajzen, p.188). Attitudes are based on the beliefs one forms about a specific scenario or object with the influence of an outside perspective or experience. As an occupational therapist, we can identify our attitudes towards a certain activity and gauge how we choose to value it and engage to procure an outcome worth learning from. The attitude we choose to present will greatly impact not just the activity but the clients participating in it as well. If you have a negative attitude towards a certain situation or outcome, the client can internally feel that energy and apply it to their own progression, which can be very damaging mentally. As occupational therapists, we must always be self-aware of how we respond. Choosing to be open-minded in every scenario allows room for beliefs to flourish in many ways. Subjective norms are defined as a “perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior” (Ajzen, p.188). This concept has a great effect on the attitudes we may or may not choose to have about activities and clinical placement. For example, I have been placed in Dana’s House for my level I fieldwork this semester. Before meeting the men, there was this social pressure to feel scared around them based on perceived norms surrounding men who are out of incarceration. Thus, my attitude could be presented negatively. However, as mentioned above, applying what I have learned in OT school thus far has allowed me to continue to have an open mind and come up with fun activities to do with these men, regardless of their societal status. Perceived behavioral control is defined as “people’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest” (Ajzen, p.188). In my fieldwork, I believe my biggest fear is not being successful in my efforts to engage the men in the activities I come up with. This expectancy of success is an area of this concept I feel a lot less confident in. As I continue to come up with activities, as well as remind myself that success does not equal perfection, I know I will become more confident in my efforts. This correlates significantly with intentions. Intentions are the centerpiece that holds attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control together. Ajzen (1991) says, “Attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms with respect to behavior, and perceived control over the behavior are usually found to predict behavioral intentions with a high degree of accuracy” (p.206). After laying out this theory into the concepts that signify the meaning, I understand how it can be applied in my assignments, the activities I complete for my fieldwork, and my future as an occupational therapist.

References

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)