

6-18-2016

Exploring the Occupation of Dating For Young Women Living in Ireland

Karen McCarthy

University College Cork, Ireland, karen.mccarthy@dominican.edu

Jeanne Jackson

University College Cork, Ireland

Survey: Let us know how this paper benefits you.

Recommended Citation

McCarthy, Karen and Jackson, Jeanne, "Exploring the Occupation of Dating For Young Women Living in Ireland" (2016). *Collected Faculty and Staff Scholarship*. 243.

<https://scholar.dominican.edu/all-faculty/243>

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty and Staff Scholarship at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Collected Faculty and Staff Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact michael.pujals@dominican.edu.



EXPLORING THE OCCUPATION OF DATING FOR YOUNG WOMEN LIVING IN IRELAND

Karen McCarthy
Department of Occupational Science &
Occupational Therapy,
University College Cork, Ireland

Introduction: Sexuality

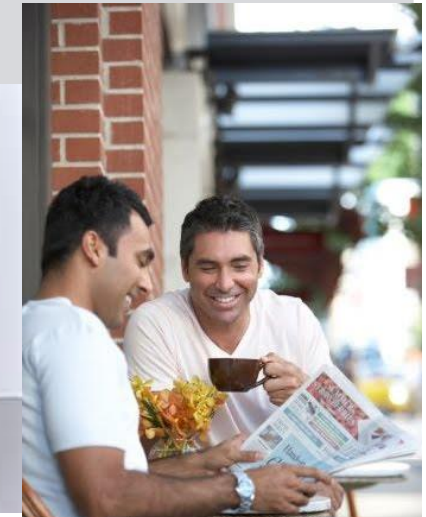
- Sexuality has an “inherently occupational dimension, which can be expressed through a variety of meaningful occupations such as dating, grooming or having sex” (Sakellariou & Algado, 2006, p.352).
- Despite research indicating the importance of addressing sexuality (White et al, 1992, Northcott & Chard, 2000), sexuality is often ignored in occupational therapy (Sakellariou & Algado, 2006, p.350).
- Sheama Krishnagiri “Mate Selection as Occupation” (Zemke & Clark, 1996)

Is Dating an Occupation?

- **Is dating an occupation?**

- Yerxa (1993) states that occupation is “self initiated, goal directed, experiential as well as behavioral , socially valued or recognized, constituted of adaptive skills or repertoires, organized, essential to the quality of life experienced, and possesses the capacity to influence health” (p. 5).

- **What is dating?**



The Study of Occupations

- Need for research focusing on the study of occupations themselves
- Gray (1997) stated that occupational therapy and occupational science could benefit from “a more profound understanding of the essence of occupation” (p. 15).
- Dickie (2003) argues that “one way to achieve this understanding is to examine occupations directly” (p. 120).

Research Aims

- 1) To explore the experience and meaning of dating occupations for women, age 24-34 years old, who identify as heterosexual, living in urban Ireland, who have participated in dating in the last 6 months.
- 2) To examine the occupation of dating, including its form, function and meaning.

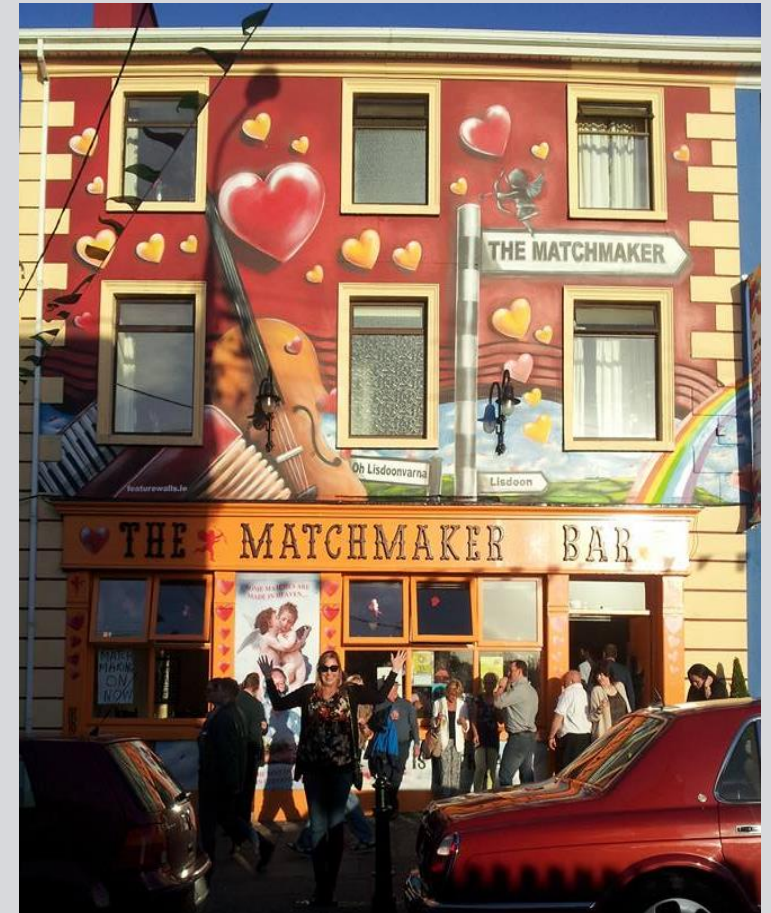
Methods

- **Data Triangulation**

- Semi structured interviews: definition of dating, history, form/function and meaning, culture, identity, environment, dimensions of dating (Time, social, physical, emotional, spiritual), values, beliefs
- Observation- “complete observer” and “observer as participant role”; use of observation guide LeCompte and Preissle (1993) (e.g. Lisdovarna Matchmaking festival, Coppers bar)
- Written documents and artefacts: eg. dating books, articles, blogs, “First Dates Ireland”, St Valentines relics and prayer book

Data Analysis:

- Individual interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Data will be coded and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). NVIVO qualitative software package will be used.
- Pseudonyms will be used to maintain confidentiality.



Participants

Recruitment: Purposive and snowball sampling

Number: 12 participants

Inclusion criteria:

- Participants who are between 24-34 years old
- Identify as female
- Identify as heterosexual
- Identify as “single” and have participated in a dating activity in the last six months
- Live in an urban area of Ireland
- Identify as Irish

History of Marriage in Ireland

- **Ancient Ireland:** abduction, virginity, November weddings, Divination customs (Ballard, 1998)
- **Medieval Ireland-** grounds for divorce, country divided Anglo-Saxon / Gaelic Irish. Monogamy not mandatory in Gaelic Ireland, clandestine marriage (without parental consent) ; marriage as private not public affair (Cosgrove, 1985)
- **Impact of Christianity:** Tudor Ireland- Martin Luther 1522 marriage ordained by God; need for marriage and priest; monogamy; consent of two people necessary (Cosgrove, 1985)
- **Pre-Famine era;** abductions and arranged marriages; money and character were important. Women age 18-20, men 21 (rural lower class marries younger)
- **Famine era-** increased division of land leading to famine; less marriages; Ireland= "Celibate Nation"; increased emigration to UK/ USA- to find matches
- Role of love vs. money/land- "love match" (Buckley, 2000), personal choice not adherence to authority (McDonnell "courtship as central to selecting a marriage partner" (McDonnell, 1999, p. 62)
- Discrimination against singles (bullying)- Chalk Sunday (Buckley, 2000)
- Role of matchmaker
- Marriage as a path to independence for women- freed them from labour of home
- **Modern era-** 1960's ; matchmaking on decline; dance halls; less surveillance "walking out" ; alcohol, cars and the sexual revolution in UK (Ryan, 2012)
- **Today:** role of internet dating; delay in marriage; cohabitation; top reason for dating= "looking for the one". (anotherfriend.com)

Initial Findings

- Dating Stages, Environments and Occupations
- Stigma
- Emotional Aspect
- Purpose of Dating

Dating: Stages, Environments and Occupations

- Stages of dating
- Meeting out (in bars) vs Online Dating or other dating strategies
- Activities on dates



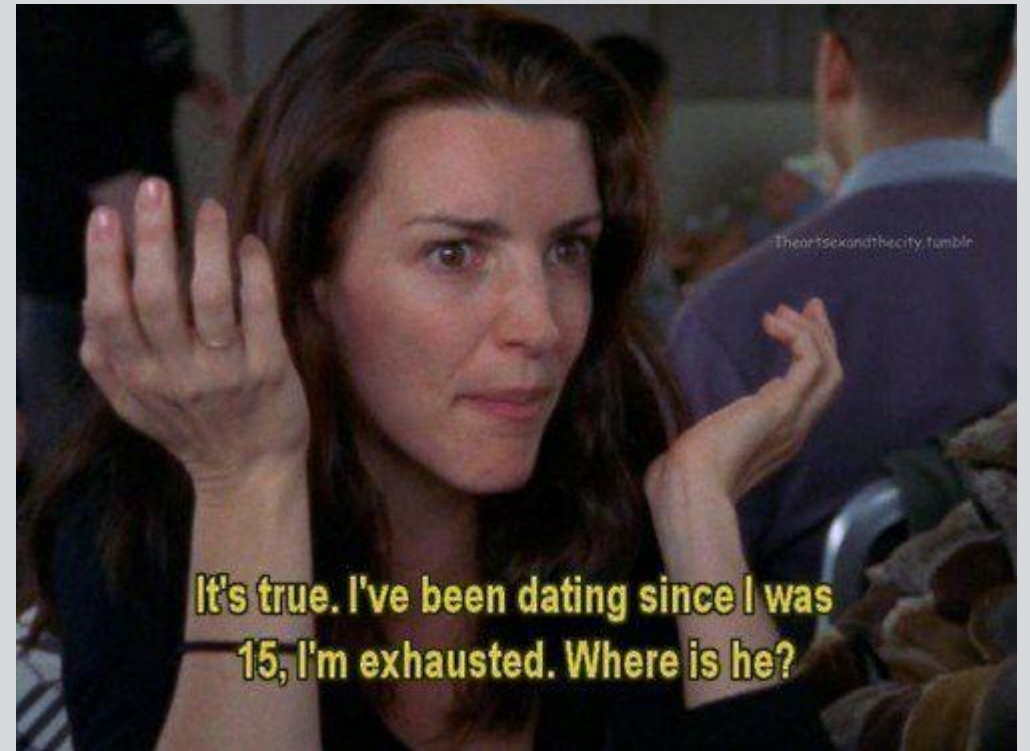
Stigma

- Mortified
- Stigma of online dating
- Age and expectations

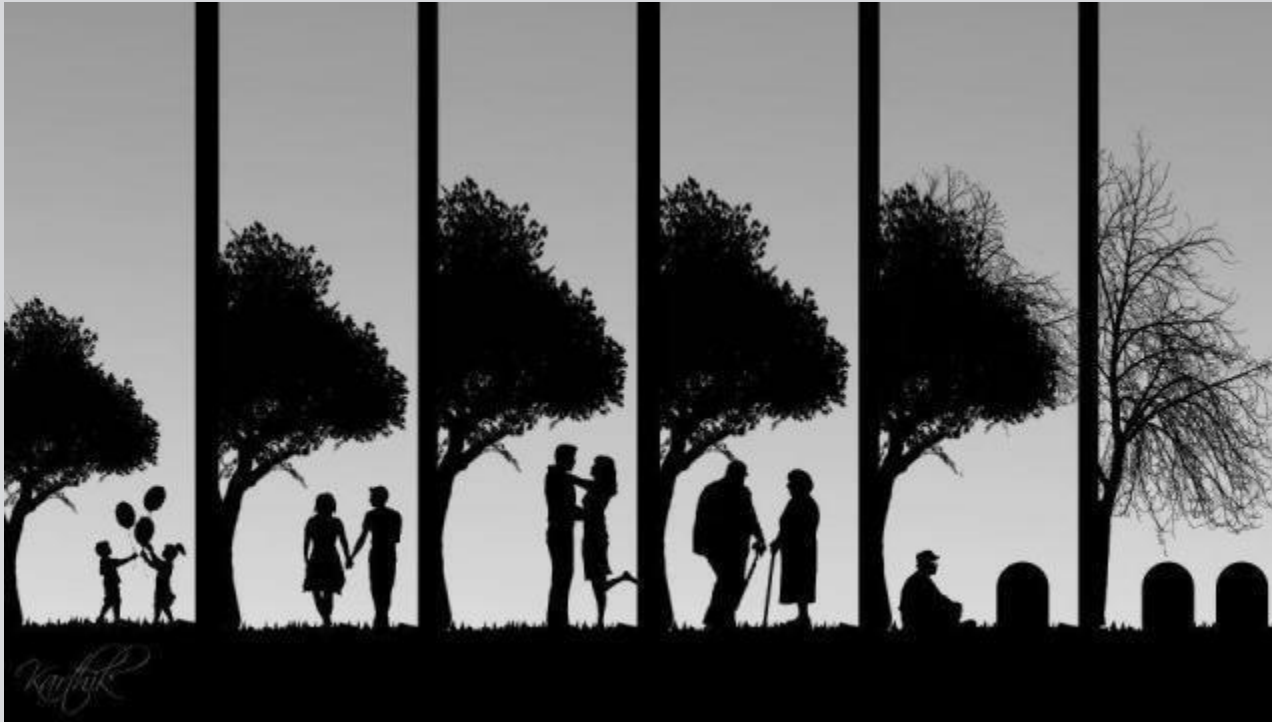


Emotional Aspect

- Emotions impact your dating activities
- Dating as an emotional rollercoaster
 - Positive and negative



Purpose of Dating



Testing the waters; a discovery phase

The potential to meet somebody

A bit in common, compatible, ticks all the boxes

Friendship, love, sex

Someone to grow with, make plans with,

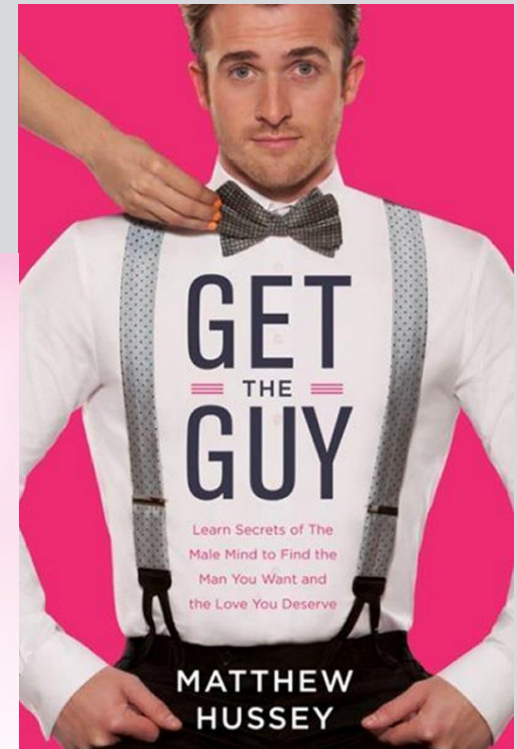
Eventually get married and have kids and all of that

I do believe that there is something out there

That love thing. It does exist

Implications for OS/OT

- Importance of exploring dating as an occupation in OS and OT
- Role emerging area for OT
- Dating coaching as expanding industry



References

- Ballard, L.M. (1998). *Forgetting Frolic: Marriage traditions in Ireland*. Belfast.
- Buckley, M. *Irish Marriage Customs*. Mercier Press: Cork.
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy (1997). *Enabling occupation: An occupational therapy perspective*. Ottawa: CAOT Publications Ace.
- Cosgrave, A. (1985). *Marriage in Ireland*. Dublin College Press.
- Krishnagiri, S. (1996). Mate Selection as Occupation. In R. Zemke & F. Clark (Eds.) *Occupational Science: The evolving discipline*, pp. 193-203, F.A. Davis Co.
- McDonnell, A. (1999). *When strangers marry: A study of marriage breakdown in Ireland*;. Columba Press: Blackrock, Co Dublin.
- Northcott, R., & Chard, G. (2000). Sexual aspects of rehabilitation: the client's perspective. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 63(9), 412-18.
- Ryan, P. (2012). *Asking Angela Macnamara: An intimate history of Irish lives*. Irish Academic Press: Portland, Oregon.
- Sakellariou, D. & Algado, S.(2006). Sexuality and Occupational Therapy: Exploring the link. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 69(8), pp. 350-356.
- White, M. , Rintala, D., Hart, K., Young Fuhrer, M. (1992). Sexual activities concerns and interests of men with spinal cord injury. *American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 71(4), 225-31.
- Yerxa, E.J. (1993) Occupational Science: A New Source of Power for Participants in Occupational Therapy. *Journal of Occupational Science Australia*, 1(1), pp.3-9.

Thank you! Questions?

karenmccarthycoaching@gmail.com

www.karenmccarthycoaching.com

