

January 2013

Impact of Disability on Celebration of Wedding Anniversaries

Emily Lemaster
Eastern Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://encompass.eku.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), and the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lemaster, Emily, "Impact of Disability on Celebration of Wedding Anniversaries" (2013). *Online Theses and Dissertations*. 188.
<https://encompass.eku.edu/etd/188>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Encompass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Online Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Encompass. For more information, please contact Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu.

Impact of Disability on Celebration of Wedding Anniversaries

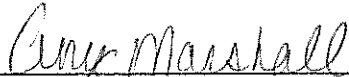
By

Emily Lemaster

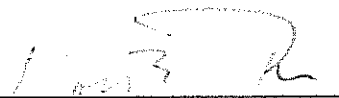
Thesis Approved:




Chair, Advisory Committee



Member, Advisory Committee



Member, Advisory Committee



Dean, Graduate School

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree at Eastern Kentucky University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of the source is made. Permission for extensive quotation from or reproduction of this thesis may be granted by my major professor, or in her absence, by the Head of Interlibrary Services when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature Emily Lomaster

Date 12/11/12

Impact of Disability on Celebration of Wedding Anniversaries

By

Emily Lemaster, Graduate Student

Bachelor of Science
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky
2011

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Eastern Kentucky University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
August, 2013

Copyright © Emily Lemaster, 2012
All rights reserved

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my wonderful thesis committee members for their time and dedication to this project. Their advice greatly helped shape the student I am and the professional I hope to become. Dr. MaryEllen Thompson, you have provided me with encouragement while challenging me to push myself in order to further my knowledge. Dr. Doris Pierce, you have expanded my knowledge in both occupational science and occupational therapy while also exposing me to great networking experiences. Professor Amy Marshall, thank you for your feedback and interest in this research study. Your support has been greatly appreciated. Elizabeth Miller Rhodus, thank you for assisting in developing this study and carrying out the first phase of interviews. This study would not be what it is without your dedication and ambition. Thank you to my parents for sticking by me throughout my time in college and always being available to talk me through the tough times. To my future husband, thank you for being my sounding board and providing me with the support I needed to finish this project. Thank you to my family and friends who were willing to listen to me talk about this project and continually encourage me to see it through.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine how married couples observe their wedding anniversaries. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 couples (four of which one partner has a disability) to determine how they celebrate their wedding anniversaries. This data was compared to how having a disability within the couple affects anniversary celebrations. Several themes emerged that were common among all participants including: an exchange of items, participants, reminiscing about the past, change within the marriage and celebration (which encompasses ritual and tradition). Few differences were noted in the couples who are living with disability. The most prominent is being more restricted financially since the onset of disability. This study will add to occupational science /occupational therapy literature as well as across the social sciences as it will determine if disability to one partner has any effect on how the married couple celebrates their wedding anniversaries.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. Introduction.	1
Background and Need.	3
Problem Statement.	4
Statement of Purpose.	4
Research Questions.	5
Definition of Terms.	5
Assumptions.	6
2. Literature Review.	7
Ritual in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy.	8
Rituals in Other Disciplines.	10
Role of Disability in Marriage.	11
3. Methodology.	15
Background.	15
Statement of Purpose.	16
Overview of Research Design.	16
Research Questions.	18
Participants.	18
Data Collection Methods.	19
Data Analysis.	19
Trustworthiness.	20
Methodological Assumptions.	20
Limitations.	20
4. Results.	22
Results from Married Couples without Disability.	22
Participants.	22
Marriage.	25
Celebration.	32

Exchange.	42
Reminisce.	45
Results from Married Couples Where One Spouse has a Disability.	49
Participants.	49
Celebration.	51
Exchange.	60
Reminisce.	62
Marriage.	66
Disability.	72
Impact of Disability on Celebration of Wedding Anniversary.	74
5. Discussion.	78
The Problem.	78
Purpose.	78
Relationship to the Literature.	79
Significance of Study.	81
Implications for Occupational Therapy.	82
Limitations.	83
Recommendations for Future Research.	83
LIST OF REFERENCES.	85
APPENDIX.	89

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Wedding anniversaries serve as an annual celebratory occasion for many married couples. The celebration that takes place may involve engaging in the same activity year after year or may evolve through the years. The day might be commemorated with gifts and can either be celebrated alone or with others. Wedding anniversary celebrations are an annual ritual few researchers have delved into. The implications of this kind of research could be far reaching within the social sciences. One example of the impact of the study of ritual is that done by Shordike and Pierce about cooking the Christmas meal in eastern Kentucky (2005). The ritual of elder women in eastern Kentucky preparing the Christmas meal illustrates the tradition and culture a ritual embodies and the identity it gives to the participants. The types of food prepared and the way they are prepared have been handed down generation to generation. Characteristics such as what is prepared, who prepares it, where the meal takes place and who attends represents a ritual within each family that makes up the Christmas meal (Shordike and Pierce, 2005). Studies such as this one provide a lens into our environmental, social and historical upbringing that further define the idea of ritual. It is important to study ritual to link the past with the present and understand the way people live their lives. By learning how couples interact within the context of their anniversary, researchers can gain insight into the relationship and marriage. This insight can in turn aid therapists when the couple is dealing with rehabilitation or treatment of a disability/disease. Knowing how the couple celebrates this ritual can afford therapists the opportunity to provide their client with the supports they need during recovery.

Just as rituals evolve or change with time so does the marriage relationship. One major factor that can alter marriage is the disability of a spouse. Rehabilitation and the need for an occupational therapist are necessary for the treatment of many diseases or injuries. Occupational therapists often operate under a family centered care model which strives to incorporate the family into care for a client receiving services. Family centered care is most often associated with working with children, but is an important aspect to consider in clients of all ages. “A person experiences life with and through his or her family” (DeGrace, 2003, p. 347). The family can serve as a motivator for an occupational therapist client to be compliant and focus on recovery or treatment. By working with one client, an occupational therapist has the potential to influence the occupations of an entire family. Often the spouse will be the one most involved in care. It is critical for occupational therapists to consider the needs of the couple together to aide in the rehabilitation process. DeGrace concludes that occupational therapists should address meaningful occupations of the family as a whole (2003). Celebrating a wedding anniversary can be a very meaningful and emotional time for a couple and one that, if missed, would be detrimental to family relationships. If known, this is an area the occupational therapist can address to ensure the couple, although receiving rehabilitation for one spouse, can still engage in occupations that are meaningful to them. If it is an annual ritual for the husband to cook dinner for his wife on their anniversary, but he has just suffered a stroke and cannot do this independently, the occupational therapist can step in and assist the man in the cooking of dinner. Allowing a married couple to engage in their annual wedding anniversary ritual despite disability helps to restore a sense of normalcy in the couple’s life after a life altering event or disease.

Background and Need

Rituals have long been a part of the occupational science language and that of sociology, anthropology and religious studies before it. Although the term has been around for some time, with its first known use being in 1570, very little research is available on the ritual associated with celebration of wedding anniversaries. As defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, ritual as a noun has several meanings including: “the established form for a ceremony”, a “ceremonial act or action” and an “act or series of acts regularly repeated in a set precise manner” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). A study done by Leeds-Hurwitz asserts that one’s wedding anniversary celebration does qualify to be termed a ritual (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005). A thorough search of the literature was conducted but very little published research was found on how a married couple celebrates their wedding anniversary and what meaning their method of celebration has to the couple.

Research has shown that marriage has been linked to both positive and negative aspects of health. The correlation has been found to be even stronger in a marriage where one partner has a disability. The caregiver burden associated with being married to someone with a disability has been studied for diagnoses such as cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal cord injury and Alzheimer’s. This research shows that marriage to, and caregiving for, an individual with a disability can put a strain on the marriage and on the health of the caregiving spouse (Holicky & Charlifue, 1999; Mutch, 2010; Williams, 2011; Wood, Goseling & Avellar, 2007).

Problem Statement

Within occupational science, studies have been conducted illustrating celebratory occupations associated with food and holidays (Hocking et. al., 2008). Studies in various medical professions such as nursing have been conducted looking at the support provided by a spouse to their partner with a disability (Mutch, 2010). However, there currently is no research regarding celebratory occupations related to the ways individuals celebrate their wedding anniversaries. Likewise no research was found on how having a disability present within a marriage affects the way annual rituals are celebrated. Studies that have been conducted regarding wedding anniversaries do not specifically address celebratory means, but focus on quality of marriage, social networking, and shared memories (Kearns & Kenneth, 2004; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this grounded theory research was to describe how married couples who were born, raised and currently reside in the United States observe their wedding anniversary. Fifteen couples in total were interviewed to develop a theory as to how couples living (without a noted disability) in the United States typically celebrate a wedding anniversary. This data was then compared to married couples where one spouse had a disability resulting in physical limitations. Similarities and differences were noted. This research will help professionals better understand annual rituals of married couples associated with celebrating their wedding anniversaries. By understanding this often private aspect of a couple's marriage, professionals and therapists will be able to better understand how to include the spouse of a client with a disability into rehabilitation or

treatment. Understanding the rituals of a couple can provide them with things to look forward to during rehabilitation, personalize treatment and provide a sense of normalcy even if it is as simple as setting the table or going to a restaurant for dinner. By learning these aspects of the client's life, an occupational therapist can make sure the client has the skills, endurance, and strength to engage in the ritual.

Research Questions

- What practices or activities do people engage in to celebrate anniversaries of their wedding day?
- Does the disability to one partner of a married couple affect how they celebrate their wedding anniversary? If yes, how so?

Definition of Terms

- Disability- an “umbrella term for impairment of body function or body structure, an activity limitation, and/or a participation restriction” (World Health Organization, 2001, p. 193). This paper focuses on individuals who have a disability resulting in physical limitations meaning they have difficulty walking, breathing, and engaging in activities of daily living without adaptation, assistance or fatigue.
- Occupation - “a subjective event in an individual's perceived temporal, spatial, and sociocultural conditions that is unique to that one-time occurrence. An occupation has a shape, a pace, a beginning, and an ending, a shared or solitary aspect, a cultural meaning to the person, and an infinite number of other perceived contextual qualities. A person interprets his or her occupations before, during,

and after they happen. Though an occupation can be observed, interpretation of the meaning or emotional content of an occupation by anyone more than the person experiencing it is necessarily inexact” (Pierce, 2001, p. 139).

- Ritual – “symbolic actions with spiritual, cultural, or social meaning, contributing to the client’s identity and reinforcing the client’s values and beliefs” (Fiese et. al., 2002).
- Routine – “established sequences of occupations or activities that provide a structure for daily life” (AOTA, 2008)
- Spouse – an individual who is married; a husband or wife
- Wedding anniversary – the annually recurring date of a couple’s marriage. The couple must be legally married via some type of ceremony be it by a justice of the peace or as part of a religious ceremony. The couple commemorates this date through some type of recognition or celebration.

Assumptions

1.) Married couples celebrating their wedding anniversaries will engage in celebratory means that are both similar and in contrast to the celebration of other couples therefore creating a ritual meaningful to only the celebrating couple.

2.) The presence of a disability following marriage will disrupt or alter the ways in which that couple celebrate their wedding anniversary.

3.) Married couples engage in an annual celebration of their wedding anniversary because celebrating wedding anniversaries is an important ritual/routine in the United States.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebration of married couples' wedding anniversaries can be dated back to medieval times in Central Europe (Wilson, 2007). Then, only the 25th and 50th wedding anniversaries were typically celebrated with silver and gold gifts from the husband to the wife. In 1937, retail jewelers in the United States published a list of gifts associated with each year up to the 15th, followed by a gift every five years, until the 60th (Wilson, 2007). Through the years, companies have continued to revise this list and create new traditions. Couples in the United States have also created their own traditions and rituals to celebrate their anniversaries in ways that reflect their social and cultural upbringings and environment.

Such traditions and rituals are intriguing to social scientists, including those in occupational science. Occupational science specifically focuses on engagement in occupation, defined by Pierce (2001) as "a specific individual's personally constructed, non-repeatable experience. That is, an occupation is a subjective event in perceived temporal, spatial, and socio-cultural conditions that are unique to that one time occurrence" (pg. 4). Relating the occupation of celebrating one's wedding anniversary to this definition frames wedding anniversary celebration as a personally and subjectively constructed experience of the couple that is non-repeatable in the chronology of their relationship, and that the celebration occurs in a certain temporal, spatial, social and cultural context. Wedding anniversary celebrations can be seen as a ritual that aids in defining the married couple taking part in it.

Ritual in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

Ritual is a term deeply embedded in the occupational science and occupational therapy literature because of the impact of ritual on one's daily life and therefore occupational being. As defined by the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, rituals are "symbolic actions with spiritual, cultural, or social meaning, contributing to the client's identity and reinforcing values and beliefs" (AOTA, 2008). Each individual has the opportunity to create and participate in rituals. Generally these can be specific to an individual or may be observed by a group or culture. Occupational science views rituals through the lens of occupation. "Rituals are marked by a predictable, seemingly scripted series of symbolic actions and objects" (Pierce, 2003, p. 202). In occupational science and occupational therapy literature, habits, routines and rituals are often studied and grouped together due to their interconnected meanings. Although each has different criteria, differentiating between the three can sometimes be difficult depending on the culture and individuals involved. Ritual in occupational therapy is looked at as a specific type of occupation "one that is symbolic of a deeper meaning and occurring in a structured and often repetitive way" (Norris, 2000, p.3).

A team of occupational therapists (all of whom are also occupational scientists) who set out to identify and define the numerous ways habit has been constructed, came up with 9 categories of habit. Although many overlap due to common properties, they are each distinct in the way they impact an individual's life and the role they take on in the rehabilitation process. One of the categories is "habit as a custom, ritual, rite or ceremony". The team separates custom, ritual, rite and ceremony, which are different from routines, because they include a more symbolic or cultural meaning (Clark, Sanders,

Carlson, Blanche, & Jackson, 2007). The symbolism or cultural aspect tied into the activity causes it to extend beyond the realm of being just a routine.

Rituals or aspects/practices of rituals are often passed down from generation to generation. The commitment to a ritual is seen as “emotional and affective” (Fiese, 2007, p. 42S). This study found that routines and rituals incorporated into the daily lives of families who have a child with asthma can help improve overall family health. Events such as a family mealtime and consistent nighttime routines become rituals with special, symbolic meaning to these families and can help keep the family in check with their health (Fiese, 2007).

One occupational therapist who works with elderly clients with Alzheimer’s disease found that rituals were critical in the lives of these adults. She illustrates the difference in routines, habits and rituals by telling the story of an elderly woman with dementia who wants to cook a meal for her family every weekend. Engaging in this activity is symbolic for the woman because she is taking care of her family and is something she has done all her life. The author points out that the result of the meal, if it tastes good or looks appealing, is obsolete because the action of cooking the meal is what matters and creates the ritual. While many might see this activity as a habit or routine, which it easily could be to certain individuals; to her it is a ritual because the meaning is much deeper as it reminds her of her past roles and memories (Yatzcak, 2011). These occupational science/occupational therapy definitions of ritual coincide with how ritual is viewed by other disciplines.

Rituals in Other Disciplines

While rituals have a distinctive yet often overlapping definition in the occupational science and occupational therapy literature, it is also commonly studied and applied in religious studies, anthropology, psychology and sociology. There have been many studies conducted on the rituals of family that look at the function of ritual and how it affects the workings of a family (Crespo, Davide, Costa & Fletcher, 2008; Fiese, Foley & Spagnola, 2006; Dickstein, 2002). Anthropologists are often interested in the meaning of rituals to both the individual and society. They examine how context affects rituals as well as the impact on social participation and relationships (Briller and Sankar, 2011). The sociology profession often explains how many major life transitions revolve around rituals. These encompass birth, graduations, marriage and death (Solomon, 2007). Sociologists also look at how “rituals connect people” and how meaning transcends the individual to create a shared meaning for all involved in the ritual (Briller and Sankar, 2011).

Psychotherapist Puterbaugh (2008) describes rituals as they are related to the family unit. Rituals provide support to families in many ways. They bring families closer together and mark special life events. A ritual can be large, private or nearly private. Some are even invisible to all but the participants involved. Puterbaugh’s definition of ritual is a “predictable set of behaviors with agree upon rules, repeated over time” (p. 68). She points out that rituals are valued by the individual due to their individualized experience of the activity. This definition allows for the possibility that many people may not even recognize their actions as rituals because it is simply the way they do things. Rituals can act as a means of therapy in which therapists use them to

encourage deeper relationships between families or couples. Rituals also “help define our roles and facilitate questions of purpose and meaning within parameters that should direct exploration” (Puterbaugh, 2008, p. 70).

One of the few located studies on wedding anniversaries comes from a sociological perspective. This study was based on the narratives of married couples celebrating their wedding anniversary. The author uses these narratives and the couples’ experiences to support the idea of wedding anniversaries as rituals. This study defined a ritual as “an act of actions intentionally conducted by a group of people employing one or more symbols in a repetitive, formal, precise, highly stylized fashion” (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005, p. 597). Here the author observed the public celebration of a couple’s fiftieth wedding anniversary as they shared it with close friends and family. It was typical for this couple to celebrate the day each year but chose this particular anniversary to share with others and make public certain details of their lives as were related to their celebration of anniversaries and their lives as a married couple (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005). Based on the previous definitions and examples, it can be concluded that the celebration of a couple’s wedding anniversary would be termed a ritual as it has specific meaning to the couple and reinforces their identity as a married couple.

Role of Disability in Marriage

Within occupational science and occupational therapy literature, no research regarding the ways individuals celebrate their wedding anniversaries. Similarly, there is also a lack of research on this topic in other socio-behavioral disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology. Studies that have been conducted regarding wedding

anniversaries do not specifically address celebratory means, but instead focus on quality of marriage, social networking, and shared memories (Abe-Rider, 1985; Kearns & Kenneth, 2004; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005).

There are many different occurrences, events, or individuals that can affect the way a couple chooses to celebrate their wedding anniversary. They can celebrate privately with no one but themselves present, they can involve their children or family members or they can include friends. These decisions depend on the couple and the meaning they attribute to celebration of a wedding anniversary. One major life event that can affect the dynamics of how a couple celebrates their wedding anniversary is the appearance of a disability in one or both partners or in their child. Often when a family member has a disability, the family's daily routines and rituals are affected (DeGrace, 2003). While this is noted primarily in the literature involving children with disabilities in regard to how it alters the family's daily life, it can also be seen with married adults (Marquenie, Rodger, Mangohig, & Cronin, 2011; Searson et. al., 2008; Mutch, 2010). Once a disability presents itself, it can change the family structures and alter routines. This change in ritual can be seen in each of the cases reported here, in which a disability occurred for one spouse after marriage.

There are also studies that look at how spouses support one another after the occurrence of certain disabilities. Research has been conducted on couples living with disabilities such as spinal cord injury, cancer, multiple sclerosis and diabetes (Holicky & Charlifue, 1999; Sanderman et. al., 2011; Mutch, 2010; De Ridder, Schreurs, & Kuijer, 2005). Social or spousal support has been shown to serve two functions in successful rehabilitation. It provides a positive effect on health and well-being and helps reduce

stress of the disabled individual (Holicky & Charlifue, 1999). One such study reviewed the literature to determine if physical handicaps led to the presence or absence of marital stress. It discovered that some of the factors in a marriage that could lead to stress when one spouse is handicapped are diminished problem solving ability, role flexibility and change in marital interaction. The change in role and marital interaction caused the marriage relationship to become a “disability marriage” in which the roles of husband and wife were modified or altered to the extent that they violated cultural prescriptions for each role. Cognitive disabilities had a greater impact on stress levels than did physical disabilities (Peterson, 1979). Another study looked at spousal support as it pertains to changes in distress in couples dealing with cancer. Their data supported previous findings that both members of a couple can be emotionally affected by cancer. Findings also showed that individuals coping with a cancer diagnosis who reported higher instances of spousal support also reported less distress over time (Dagan et. al., 2011).

In the case of spinal cord injuries, which tend to occur at relatively young ages, what would be the main source of support for most individuals, a spouse, may not be available. A study conducted on 225 British survivors of spinal cord injury (SCI) revealed that “married individuals scored better in the areas of depression, life satisfaction, psychological well-being and perceived quality of life” than did their unmarried counterparts (Holicky & Charlifue, 1999). When living with a spouse with a disability, particularly a progressive one, it can be difficult to maintain the identity of a married couple. Mutch (2010) found that the spouse of individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS) feel a loss of identity as husband and wife as they take on the role of the

carer. In these cases the spouse continued their carer role because the commitment associated with marriage and their sense of duty to take care of their spouse. It is also important to note that 5/8 spouses of an individual with MS interviewed in this study thought their marriage was stronger in many ways as a result of their dealing with disability. They felt this was due to their marriage commitment being tested and surviving the progression of MS (Mutch, 2010).

Due to the lack of evidence available on the topics of how married couples celebrate their wedding anniversaries and the impact of disability on the ritual of celebration of wedding anniversaries, this study attempts to describe how married couples who have been raised and currently reside in the United States celebrate their wedding anniversaries. Not only will this study add to occupational science and occupational therapy literature, but it will offer empirical evidenced based data regarding social and cultural celebratory occupations in observance of married couples' wedding anniversaries useful across social sciences.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Background

This study was conducted in two parts. The first was a project done with the researcher and fellow Masters of Occupational Therapy student, Elizabeth Miller Rhodus. In this part of the study, 15 typical couples were interviewed to explore how they celebrate their wedding anniversaries. This research came from an occupational science point of view to look at the ritual associated with celebration of wedding anniversaries and the co-occupation that is involved. From this study, the researcher decided to move forward with the research to interview couples in which one spouse has as disability that results in a physical limitation. This portion of the study looks to examine the potential implications and value of the information for occupational therapists.

A preliminary literature review was conducted to establish need for this line of research. Multiple disciplines were consulted, resulting in only a handful of studies pertaining to celebration of wedding anniversaries. As the ritual of celebrating one's wedding anniversary serves as a meaningful occupation to the couple, it is important for professionals such as occupational therapists to be aware of its value to the couple. Meaningful occupations and events can be utilized by occupational therapists practicing family centered care for engaging the client and their family, in this case a spouse, in the rehabilitation process.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this grounded theory research was to describe how married couples celebrate their wedding anniversaries. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 15 married couples who did not identify as having a disability causing physical limitations. An additional four couples in which one spouse has a disability causing physical limitations were interviewed. This study looks to determine if the presence of a disability within a marriage has any impacts on the way that couple celebrates their wedding anniversary. Similarities and differences between the two groups will be noted.

Overview of Research Design

The study's research design is qualitative, using a grounded theory approach. The grounded theory methodology was chosen with the hope of developing a theory about the way married couples celebrate their wedding anniversaries. Eastern Kentucky University's Institutional Review Board approved the study in January 2011 with an extension granted in January 2012 for completion by December 2012.

Grounded theory was originally developed by Glasser and Strauss in the 1960's by offering systematic strategies for qualitative research practice. They proposed a list of components that comprise grounded theory practice. These include:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each state of the analysis
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps

- Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p. 5-6)

This study remains true to grounded theory by following the suggested blueprint of what a study should entail and the steps in which it should be completed. “Grounded theory studies emerge from wrestling with data, making comparisons, developing categories, engaging in theoretical sampling and integrating an analysis” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 510).

As per grounded theory, no hypothesis was developed prior to beginning the study. Initial data collection began in February of 2011. One of the key constructs of grounded theory is that while the researcher collects data, analysis begins. In this study, the constant comparative method of data analysis was utilized as the researcher collected data and then analyzed it to use when collecting additional data. The final interview was conducted in August of 2012.

Married heterosexual couples were interviewed with both partners present in one interview. The interview lasted no longer than 90 minutes and took place at the location of the participants choosing (often their home) using a semi-structured interview approach. Participants were available for follow up questions or interviews, although none were needed. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and loaded onto computer software for analysis. Data was coded and analyzed using HyperRESEARCH software. To follow the process of grounded theory, open codes were established to represent the most prevalent categories found within the data (Creswell, 2007).

Research Questions

- What practices or activities do people engage in to celebrate anniversaries of their wedding day?
- Does the disability to one partner of a married couple affect how they celebrate their wedding anniversary? If yes, how so?

Participants

Study participants all currently (at the time of their interview) reside in and were born in the United States. Participants included 15 Caucasian heterosexual married couples (30 participants) who participated in the first phase of the study. Participants for the second phase of the study include four Caucasian heterosexual married couples in which one of the partners is living with a disability. Further inclusion criteria consists of couples in their first marriage, married for at least one year and both participants must be at least eighteen years of age or older. Participants included a range in ages and length of marriage. Length of marriage ranged from one year to 65 years with the average length being 27 years. Age of interviewees ranged from the youngest at 23 years to the oldest at 81 years old. All participants were unrelated to the researcher. Participants were recruited via convenience sampling through multiple strategies. The majority of participants were recruited through word of mouth from the researcher asking friends and acquaintances if they would be interested or if they knew of anyone who would be interested in participating.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection was carried out via a face-to-face interview using a semi-structured format between the researcher and a married couple (both partners present for the same interview). Each interview was audio recorded with a handheld recorder, transcribed verbatim and coded using HyperRESEARCH software. The researcher had a set of questions and topics to discuss with each couple but allowed the participants to direct the interview to maintain a conversation like flow. Questions covered topics including: how the couple typically celebrate their wedding anniversary, who usually plans the activities, how activities done in celebration of anniversary are different than when the same activity is done any other day, perceptions of traditional or historical ways of celebrating wedding anniversaries and future plans for anniversaries (See Appendix for interview protocol). Each participant read and signed the consent form provided by Eastern Kentucky University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) consenting to have the interview audio recorded and used for the study.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and uploaded to HyperRESEARCH software for coding. Open coding was conducted to code the data for the major information categories that emerged from the interviews. The codes used were: participants, marriage, reminisce, celebration and exchange. Once these codes were established, each interview transcript was read carefully and any information that pertaining to each code was placed in a separate word document. Each of these documents were read and summarized to create a memo for each identified code. The

memos included quotations that illustrate pertinent information gained from all interviews.

Trustworthiness

Data from the first portion of this study was reviewed by Dr. Doris Pierce for accuracy and to assist in placement of the themes, subthemes and sub-subthemes. This review adds credibility to the interpretation of the study. All themes, subthemes and sub-subthemes were evaluated and confirmed by both researchers (Emily Lemaster and Elizabeth Miller Rhodus).

Methodological Assumptions

1.) Utilizing a semi-structured interview protocol with both spouses present will yield valuable data about how the couple celebrates their wedding anniversary.

2.) Constant comparative methods will allow for development of codes to the point of saturation within the collected data.

Limitations

1.) Small sample size with 19 participating couples (38 individuals total).

2.) Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling with all participants currently residing in central or eastern Kentucky.

3.) Interviewing the couples jointly may have altered answers the couple would have given if each partner had been interviewed separately.

4.) Researcher is not yet a certified occupational therapist or experienced researcher.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The following chapter discusses results gained from both phases of the research surrounding how married couples celebrate their wedding anniversaries. The first section includes all information resulting from memos from the 15 couples interviewed who do not have a disability. The second section has results from the four couples interviewed where one of the spouses has a disability. Finally similarities and differences will be reported on the comparison of the two groups (couples without disabilities compared to couples where one spouse has a disability). Results were produced from analysis of the 15 initial interviews, through multiple levels of coding.

Once the audio recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, open codes were established to define broad themes within the data. The five codes were: participants, marriage, exchange, celebration and reminisce. From these themes, axial codes were created to identify subthemes within each open code.

Results from Married Couples without Disability

Participants

The participants themselves are an integral part of the celebration of an anniversary. Factors such as how long the couple has been married, their ages and how they involve others in their celebration make each couple's anniversary a special event.

Years married. All couples stated how long they had been married. Time married ranged from 1 to 65 years. Many couples also stated how long they dated before

marriage. Of those who said how long they dated the shortest was 9 months and the longest was 8 years.

Couples ages. Many couples stated their current ages. The youngest interviewee who gave an age was 23 and the oldest was 81.

Co-occupation. All of the couples celebrated their wedding anniversaries together. Many of the activities or actions taken by the couples as part of that celebration were done alone, with just the two of them. Some participants wanted to spend time alone on their anniversary because that is the only time they have the chance to be alone. “That’s the main aspect of the celebration time; involving some time away from our kids”. (Anna and John).

For others it is important to differentiate between a typical night out to dinner, which often involves friends or family, to indicate how special the anniversary is to them. Spending time alone separates it from everyday activities.

Beth: And we will usually talk about remember when we had the big snow.

Remember when, you know. We usually try to talk about it. And we know what the significance of that particular day is and why we are going out. Because a lot of times when we go out to eat we take friends and this time we want to be alone just the two of us. (Beth and Chris)

Other couples take trips such as a cruise or a weekend get away by themselves. The age of a couple’s children played a role in the celebration of all couples who have children. Many couples mentioned that it was harder to celebrate alone when the kids

were young. For the older couples it became easier to go out or plan a trip alone when the kids were older.

Involvement of others. Almost all couples talked about some instance when they involved someone else in the celebration of their anniversary. This was more prominent for the older couples and couples who had younger children.

Involvement of family. All of the couples who involve others in their celebration mentioned something about some type of celebration involving family. For almost all couples this meant they involved their children in celebrating their anniversary. This involvement included reminiscing with their children about the wedding or past anniversaries. “And for a long time we always watched the video of our wedding on our anniversary. And we would let the kids watch it and stuff too” (Anna and John). The older couples were more likely to involve their children than were the younger couples because the younger couples, who often had smaller children, wanted to use their anniversary as a time to spend together without their children present.

For many, the involvement of family centered around a meal. Participants would either go out to dinner or fix a meal at home. Often times it was a favorite restaurant that was visited or one that was nicer than they would typically choose to eat at.

Dana: But now we, most of the time we will take our children and grandchildren.

Interviewer: So is that important for you when you celebrate is to do it with your family as opposed to being alone?

Mitch: Oh yes, yes it is. Yes, we always included the children in it until...

Dana: Until they got older and left home

(Dana and Mitch)

Involvement of friends. Much of the involvement of friends took place on milestone years such as the 50th when both family and friends were invited to join the celebration. For one couple who does not have kids, their church family was often involved in the celebration of their anniversary. For another who eats dinner together every night, the anniversary is a chance to enjoy time with friends.

Lauren: He and I have dinner together, you know the two of us five nights out of every week so um, you know not that having dinner on our anniversary just the two of us isn't important, we do it quite a bit anyway so that might be a little bit different than other couples. (Lauren and Dale)

Marriage

Marriage and life was discussed while describing anniversary celebrations. Couples talked about their relationship, responsibilities, children, establishment of routines, the celebration day, planning, and other's involvement in their life and celebration.

Relationship. Several couples talked about their relationship in terms of changes over time (as length of marriage increases), perseverance and the desire to show their love for one another on a daily basis instead of just once a year.

Changes over time. The lengths of marriages in years were:

1, 2, 6, 13, 16, 16, 23, 24, 26, 33, 33, 36, 53, 58, and 65. A couple talked about losing personal space after they got married. Another couple continued this idea, and said with

time, they became more comfortable with one another. Money was discussed, as participants stated they did not have much money in the beginning of their relationship but became established with time. Couples talked about not having large wants or needs in their lives. The majority of couples described changes and adjustments in their relationship as children were born, grew, and move away. One couple joined a bowling league that met one night a week while their children were young so that they could enjoy being together. Other couples talked about having more “us” time, as their children got older. A husband described changes associated with children by saying:

The longer you're married and the more different things that you have happen in your life as far as kids and work and you know I mean it's bad to say but you almost lose touch with one another a little bit because you are so focused on all your other parts so I can see more know, because after 25 years your kids are gone and you can kind of finally refocus on each other again. (Lauren and Dale)

Couples that were married for several years talked about how time has flown by for them. A couple talked about how family has become more important to them as they aged.

Perseverance. Numerous couples discussed perseverance through good times and the bad. Couples talked about still being married, despite the high divorce rate in the US society. Marriage was perceived as job by one couple and another couple talked about how marriage is something you have to work together to achieve. They said it is important to understand that everyone has their faults and that no one will ever be perfect so you just have to work through those times together. The husband stated, “And you've

been told marriage is 50/50. It's 100/100. Always remember that, it's not 50/50 (Dana and Mitch).

One couple had the addition of four younger siblings into their relationship after the wife's parents died two years into their marriage. This was an adjustment, but they persevered. They indicated that helping each other out and communication were most important. They said:

Wife: I feel like if there is one thing that is so meaningful in a marriage is communication. Talk to each other, you know, you are going to have your ups and downs because you are different people but when you get out of sorts, talk about it, talk about your likes and dislikes and don't say things you don't mean, don't say nothing. A lot of people say things they don't mean when they are angry (Warren and Joy)

Display love for one another. Participants talked about ways of showing their love for one another on a daily basis. Couples talked about being affectionate every day and truly valuing being together every day. Five couples describe the importance of acknowledging their love every day, and so the anniversary celebration is a time for reflection rather than focusing on being affectionate.

Responsibilities. Responsibilities, such as work, bills, housework and children, were discussed as they were incorporated into marriages.

Work. Couples talked about their jobs. A couple that has been together for 58 years talked about the husband's travels at the beginning of their relationship. His wife lived in Alabama, but his job was in Chicago, and so he drove back and forth every

weekend to see her. Another couple discussed how they both worked in the beginning of their relationship, but now, only that husband works full-time. Other wives talked about being stay-at-home moms. One wife gave up her career in order to take care of their five children. Husbands talked about job requirements limiting their time with their family. A husband thanked his wife for being the rock of their family throughout the marriage.

House work and children. House chores and responsibilities were discussed. Several husbands helped with child care or child responsibilities, such as washing diapers every night after work. One couple talked about their responsibilities and taking care of one another when sick or injured.

You know we are both from large families from a rural family and we feel like there are women's jobs and men's jobs, but it quits, you know for years he didn't help do house work or cooking or dish washing but gradually he started doing it, like during the winter when there is no outside work to do, he helps me do everything, and I was in an accident five years ago and was in a wheelchair all winter and he did all the cooking and cleaning. He didn't do it like I would, but he did it and it was okay. (Warren and Joy)

Another couple talked about the norms and chores in the house. They talked about doing the "norm" to keep things in the house flowing smoothly. They discussed how keeping the house clean can be difficult because they believe in living in your house and not trying to make it look perfect, but lived in instead.

Children. Children impacted the marriage and anniversary in various ways. Three couples did not have children.

Celebration. Couples discussed limited options for anniversary celebrations once they had children, particularly young children. The anniversary celebration was often planned around children's busy schedules, around babysitting availability, or included the children. A couple explained their planning in terms of whether they would be able to get someone to watch their children or not. They did not make many plans because they never knew if they could find a sitter at the right times. "It's not that we are looking over our marriage or anything else like that, but time plays a critical part in your marriage" (Shawn and Jill). They also talked about taking advantage of any time they had together while at their child's soccer tournament over their anniversary. They used that time to go out to eat and just create a good time out of it even if they didn't get to do anything else to celebrate.

Couples explained how their conversations were usually related to their children. Some would have short anniversary celebrations to check on the children. One couple renewed their vows so that their children could be involved in their marriage ceremony. Couples explained that anniversary celebrations became easier as their children got older and moved out. One couple said they waited until their children were older to make extravagant anniversary celebration plans.

Family. Family life and children involvement were important for most couples. Couples focused on their children. A husband explained that they watched television with their children, had a small house to be close to the family, and valued family time. Parenting styles were discussed as important. A couple explained that they had to be on the 'same page' for parenting.

Routine. Various routines were set within the couples' marriages. Couples talked about how they were able to settle down and not be on the go all the time once they were married and established routines. House work became routine chores, and referred to as 'the norm.' Another couples talked about their involvement in church as routine. Other routines included having dinner together five nights out of the week, family breakfast every Sunday, or having dinner with adult children every weekend. A wife said:

That was during the day that you cooked too, there was no McDonalds on every corner, see this was in the 50's and we had family supper every night just like the Walton's and we made a big garden, we've always lived in the country and the kids have had space to do whatever they wanted to do. We moved here in Scott county in '64 we had a pastor with a pony we had a chicken house with chickens we had a big garden, we had things to do and we always did it together. (Warren and Joy)

Celebration day. Several factors in a marriage affected the day of anniversary celebrations. A couple that was together for 65 years explained the celebration patterns of their generation by saying:

Husband: they didn't even call it anniversaries then, not until you got up to 50

Wife: We had an anniversary every year papaw (laughing)

Husband: Well I'm just saying, nobody paid any attention about it. Till it got to 50. And then they went all out.

Wife: It wasn't no big deal back then. You was married and that was it. Times was a lot different back when we got married, honey.

Interviewer: What year did you get married?

Wife: 1945 (Will and Barb).

Convenience. The day that couples celebrated their anniversary was not always on their actual anniversary. The majority of couples said that if their anniversary fell on an inconvenient day, such as during the week, they would wait to celebrate on a more convenient day. Couples indicated that they acknowledged their anniversary and exchanged cards on their anniversary day, but the celebration activities were postponed.

External factors. Several external factors related to their marriage and life impacted the celebration day of the anniversary. Couple's worked around their children's schedules, work schedules, and church activities. Another external factor that impacted the celebration day was the time of year of the anniversary day. One couple's anniversary vacations were impacted because their anniversary was during hurricane season. Another couple's anniversary was too close to Christmas to travel, because they did not want to be away for Christmas. Health was another impacting factor impacting the celebration day, be it sickness of the couple or children.

Planning. When planning was needed, such as dinner reservations, traveling or child care, fourteen of the fifteen wives interviewed planned the anniversary activities. Comments were made describing that the wife knew the couple's schedule better, knew their children's schedule, knew work schedule, and were able to make plans around everyday life. Men did contribute to ideas, but the women typically made the plans. The amount of time given for planning depended on the type of celebration. Child care and

dinner reservations were planned 1-2 weeks ahead of time, large vacations were months in advance, and dinner with a movie was spur of the moment planning.

Other's involvement. Friend and family involvement in everyday activities, such as dinner, movies, and hanging out was common amongst couples. Some participants described their anniversary celebration as being different because it was a time where they were alone rather than with others. Other couples described other's involvement in their marriage, as well as their anniversary celebration.

Celebration

In the discussion of wedding anniversary couples addressed the topics of item exchange, their rituals (ways of celebration), convenience of when or what to do, their views of traditional and nontraditional celebrations, how planning is done, and how the anniversary is made special in comparison to everyday activities.

Item exchange. All couples talked about some type of exchange in relation to their wedding anniversary celebration.

Cards. The exchange of cards on a yearly basis was brought up by each couple. Some couples exchange multiple cards each year or give the same card 2 or 3 years in a row. One couple makes a game out of it by seeing who can hide the card somewhere without the other knowing they were getting a card.

Cathy-I think it's an unspoken game, we've never even talked about this, but it's a game where we put the card and trying to get to the card to the person without them knowing that you gave them a card. So at first it could have been under the

pillow, he always gets up before I do and I would wake up and the card would be on the pillow when I woke up in the morning, you know, then it started moving to the bathroom, so I'd go into the bathroom and there the card would be

Vince-then you'd put them in my briefcase or mail them to my office and I would put hers in her purse or by the coffee pot in the morning (Vince and Cathy).

There were stories told related to cards that included being sneaky to purchase one while at the store without letting the spouse see, accidentally giving a birthday card on the anniversary, and giving one funny and one sentimental for the same anniversary because he couldn't pick just one. One wife makes the cards she gives her husband. Of the couples who said when they exchange cards, they were all given on the actual anniversary.

Gifts. Couples also talked about either their gift exchange or lack of gift exchange. Flowers were a common gift mentioned with the husband sending flowers to his wife's work or to the house. One couple said they use their anniversary as an excuse to go on a trip or buy something for one another.

Mia: Yeah. One year we said we went to Ireland.

Jay: Yeah we did. We went to Ireland.

Mia: Although that was in May and our anniversary is in January, July rather.

Jay: It's still close. What we do is way well this is our excuse for spending a bunch of money.

Mia: Yes. (Jay and Mia)

Other couples said they do not exchange gifts because there is nothing they need. Overall, younger couples were more likely to exchange gifts. The older couples also talked about having exchanged gifts in the earlier years of their marriage. This indicates gift exchange is less common as length of marriage increases. Additionally the younger couples did not have a lot of money to spend on their celebration so they tended to have smaller celebrations that would only involve exchanging cards or gifts and having a meal together. Once the couples were older and more established with a steady income, the participants were more likely to have a more involved/more expensive celebration.

Rituals. Each couple talked about the rituals or ways of celebration associated with their anniversary. Each has their own special way of commemorating the day. Some do the same thing every year while others try something new for each anniversary. Some couples do things they normally do not do like going to a movie or taking a trip without their children. A common theme of involving a meal or trips into the celebration emerged among all participants.

Meals. One common theme with all the couples was the incorporation of meals into the anniversary celebration. Couples either go out to dinner or make dinner at home. For those who go out, they go to nicer places than they would normally go. Most couples prefer to have dinner alone, but others shared it with family or friends. One couple always makes their anniversary a family celebration by gathering the whole family together to either go out to eat or having a cookout. They always wait until the weekend to have the dinner so their family that works will be able to attend. Involving family in everything they do is extremely important to this couple.

Once couple goes to Red Lobster every year because it is the wife's favorite while another chooses to make lunch their biggest meal of the day and go out to a nice restaurant for that. Only the one couple has a specific place they must eat at each year. The rest tend to pick somewhere new each year. Another couple goes to a different winery that provides a sit down dinner every year.

Trips. Couples talked about going on trips as a celebration of their anniversary. One couple went on a cruise for their 25th anniversary as the first big celebration they had ever done. Another couple goes on a trip somewhere new for each anniversary. Other couples have gone on weekend or overnight trips just to get away from everything. Some trips were taken alone while others involved family. One couple talked about how they always went alone on trips when they were first married, but in the more recent years they tend to always go with family.

Mark: When was the last time we took a trip just you and me hun? I mean it seems like we've gotten into this group vacation thing where we're going with my family.

Linda: yeah I think when we first got married, we would go just you and I on our anniversary trips. (Mark and Linda)

One couple talked about the importance of revisiting the place they were married for the 1st anniversary and taking their son back there in the future. Other couples talked about wanting to go back to the place they had their honeymoon. Future trips were also discussed in relation to anniversary celebrations.

Convenience. Convenience played a major role in what, when and where anniversary celebrations take place. The convenience of money and time were also important. In the early years the couples did not have a lot of money so they had to do smaller things, but now that they are more established, there are more options.

Walter-yeah we went on a cruise. But up until we, we just, I don't know maybe we would go to a movie but we didn't do anything special for a long time.

Jenny-we still don't

Walter-no other than just going out for a meal, don't make a big deal out of it

Jenny-yeah back then we didn't have much time or much money, now we have plenty of both. We have plenty of time and all the money we need and we can do about what we want to but we don't have very big wants, so (Walter and Jenny).

Couples also noted that the years when their children were young were more difficult to work in an anniversary celebration and now that their children are older it is easier to take time for themselves. Only one couple said it was important for them to do their celebrating on the actual day of their anniversary. The rest have their celebration on a day that is convenient for their schedules. If the anniversary falls during the week they almost always wait until the weekend to celebrate because it is so much more convenient and the weekend usually affords them with more things to choose from to be able to do such as going to the mall or seeing a movie.

Work schedules and the activities of children as well as finding someone to watch their kids were major factors. Two couples mentioned planning their activities around church times so they did not miss a service. One couple was going on a cruise with their

family which happened to fall the week before their anniversary so they counted that as their anniversary gift. Another couple used the wife's business trip to France as an anniversary get away.

Traditional. Only three of the fifteen couples consider the way they celebrate to be traditional. All of those participants who consider their means of celebration as traditional have been married less than 33 years. Almost all the couples agreed that traditional ways of celebrating involves cards, presents, flowers, following the gifts to get for each particular anniversary and dinner. Of the 12 couples that identified themselves as non-traditional in their celebration, each of them incorporated some aspect of their definition of traditional celebratory methods into their celebration. Four out of the fifteen couples participated in the tradition of eating the top of their wedding cake on their 1st anniversary. Another couple were not able to do this at the 1st anniversary but did it at about a year and a half. One couple considered themselves traditional because they want to include their family in their celebration and have a big meal like its Thanksgiving to celebrate the anniversary. Those who identify as traditional do so because they exchange cards, have dinner and take trips together. They identify this way because they enjoy their time together and think this is how most other people they know typically celebrate their anniversaries.

Gifts. Most couples knew about the traditional list of gifts that are suggested for couples to exchange each year. They could name some of the bigger anniversaries like the 25th being silver and 50 being the golden anniversary as well as the 1st being paper and recognizing that one of them is diamonds. Only two couples mentioned any other gifts (tin, aluminum, and bronze) but did not give the year associated with them. Some

couples would only follow the list on certain years. An example of this was a husband who gave paper on the first anniversary by wrapping his wife's anniversary present in the funny paper/comic section of the Sunday newspaper. Others talked about attempting to follow the list of traditional gifts but found them unrealistic.

Linda: I started to, when we first got married, I started to follow the little rules you know the first year is paper and then it got to be like bronze, I mean what do you buy a man that is bronze? So I didn't do that anymore

Mark: yeah we don't do that

Linda: I don't do that anymore, but I think 25 is diamonds or something so you might have to adhere to that one. (Mark and Linda)

Non-traditional. Twelve of the fifteen couples interviewed consider the way they celebrate their wedding anniversary to be non-traditional. All of the couples who consider their celebration nontraditional have been married more than 33 years. They gave various reasons for thinking this. One couple considered themselves to be non-traditional because they are still married after 24 years when divorce among people their age is so prevalent. Another thinks that beating the statistical odds and still being married is nontraditional. One couple said they just aren't traditional people. They got married on the beach and get practical gifts for one another like rocking chairs and tennis shoes instead of going by the list of what you are supposed to get.

For some couples the roles for different aspects of celebration were reversed. One husband was better at remembering the date of their anniversary. Another husband did the planning for celebrations while yet another was more sentimental about the

anniversary than the wife was. Other nontraditional things mentioned were having a ring tattooed on the husband's ring finger because his wedding band no longer fits and the wife not being interested in traditions like rings (she actually lost her engagement ring and it was not a big deal to her).

Planning. Discussion of planning varied widely among the couples. The wife was most often the one making the actual arrangements. Some activities required months of planning but the majority of couples waited until the last minute to make plans.

Past planning. The vast majority of planning is done by the wife. One wife attributed this to her being more aware of their kids schedules so she could decide which night would be best to go out for dinner. Planning was often dependent on everyone's schedules as well as the weather or time of year for couples going on trips. The time ranges needed to plan vary based on what activity is being planned. For a cruise, vacation or a trip that involved the whole family, planning began months in advance. Activities like going out to dinner or taking an overnight trip took a few weeks of planning, mainly to arrange child care for that time. Other couples were more last minute in their planning and decided what to do within days of the anniversary. Some wait until the day of if they are just deciding where to go to dinner.

Some couples work together to plan certain parts of their activities. The husband will be better at one part while the wife is better at something else. One couple explained how the husband usually comes up with the actual idea of what they will do and coordinates those plans but if it is just going out to dinner they just decide it together at the time. Some couples place the full responsibility for all of the planning on one spouse.

In one case the wife quickly answered that she was the planner in the family. When asked if the husband ever had any say in the planning he replied: "I could have say in it, but usually it's whatever she wants" (Pete and Rachel).

Future planning. All couples talked about things they wanted to do in the future to celebrate their anniversary. Almost all involved taking some type of trip like a cruise or visiting somewhere they have never been. No couple had any specific trip or activity already planned for any future anniversaries. They just talked about things they might like to do. Some couples talked about how it will be easier to plan future anniversary celebrations now that their children are older.

Interviewer: Do you have any plans for the future?

Beth: well we've talked about a cruise and we've tossed that around that you know maybe because you know like I said with the kids the age they are it's not a big issue if we do decide to go somewhere for a few days so we have sorta talked about a cruise and we always enjoy just an overnight trip or a couple of nights even if it's just Lexington or Huntington. Just to get away from the normal routine. So I think we will have you know a little more time to plan and to do a little bit more than we did maybe in years past, especially those teenage years
(Beth and Chris)

One couple said that after 65 years together they just hoped to have more.

Another talked about wanting 50 more anniversaries together because then they would each be 100 years old and could then go their separate ways.

How anniversary is made special. Each couple has their own way of making their anniversary special. Most said that knowing the reason for that particular dinner or trip made it more special. There is a more special reason why they are going to dinner. Couples will go to a nicer restaurant that they don't eat at on a normal basis. One husband talked about adding special personal touches to their anniversary celebration that makes the event more special. One couple said they tell the waiter it is their anniversary and he brings them a piece of cake so that makes it different than other meals out. Several couples talked about the conversation during an anniversary dinner being different than a normal conversation. They will talk about the past and reminisce while alone at dinner.

Laura-well the anniversary is just more romantic I guess and just we'd go out to eat normally you know what ever comes up whether its work or our son or whatever, on the anniversary you kind of try to focus on each other and you know remembering getting together and where our life's taken us, what else would you Dennis- yeah I'd say the conversation, you make an effort to you know remember the day you got married or remember the day you first got together, and like she said we do a lot of times, we talk about man I can't believe we've went from here to here to here and now we're at this point and talk about how things change.

You know rather than just talking about everyday stuff, we talk about things that matter more I guess (Laura and Dennis).

One couple talked about just taking that time to recognize how blessed they are to have been together as long as they have. Putting this recognition in the forefront is what sets it apart from other times. "We know what the most important thing is and it is each other, as a couple, but putting others first is a blessing also" (Tara and Roy). Another

couple said that they do it and appreciate it for what it means but that they do not make a big fuss about it or let it interfere with any other thing going on in their lives at that time. Another set of participants who involves their entire family in the celebration says the anniversary is more special because the whole family tries to get together to have a meal and spend time together. They count it special because it is always better when the whole family is together.

Exchange

All couples had some kind of exchange related to their wedding anniversary. All discussed exchanging cards and some exchanged gifts. Several participants described the anniversary as an excuse for gift exchange and other's talked about future plans for exchanging for their wedding anniversary.

Cards. Card exchange occurred between all couples interviewed as part of their wedding anniversary celebration. The couples exchanged cards every year.

Connie: We always go out for a really nice card, anniversary card. I think that's probably, we both get each other an anniversary card that's you know real sentimental. It doesn't even have to say the year on it. But it will just be really, really nice.

Tony: I think each one of us probably puts a lot of thought and looking into that particular card. And it's uh its hard to do it in secret. (Connie and Tony)

The majority of couples had detailed stories about card giving. Some stories involved giving the same card numerous years in a row, giving birthday cards, and making cards. The actual exchange of the card almost always happened on the actual

anniversary, which may or may not have been the time of celebration. Couples developed traditions in card exchange. A husband described how he hid the cards for his wife and made a game out of it. Many times he would purchase multiple cards to give his wife because he could not pick just one. He would spend an hour looking at cards and end up with three or four. He always had to include one sentimental card and one that was funny and usually had something to do with sex. The husband would have one sitting on the sink when she fixes her hair and then put one in her car on the steering wheel or in the refrigerator. This was his way of trying to make the say special for his wife. Another couple revealed an unspoken game about their anniversary card exchange. They said:

Cathy- there's always a card...I think it's an unspoken game, we've never even talk about this, but it's a game where we put the card and trying to get to the card to the person without them knowing that you gave them a card. So at first it could have been under the pillow, he always gets up before I do and I would wake up and the card would be on the pillow when I woke up in the morning, you know, then it started moving to the bathroom, so I'd go into the bathroom and there the card would be

Vince-then you'd put them in my briefcase or mail them to my office and I would put hers in her purse or by the coffee pot in the morning. (Vince and Cathy)

Gifts. Exchange of gifts or tangible items occurred in some couples' anniversary celebration. One couple discussed how they usually want to save their money for their vacation rather than gifts, but the husbands always bought his wife a gift anyway. Flowers were given in most years from the husband to the wife. Flowers were referred to

as one of the annual gifts, often accompanied by a card. Gift giving fell into three categories: functional or wanted gifts, traditional gifts, or no gifts given.

Gifts that were wanted. Several partners discussed buying gifts that their loved one expressed as wanting. In speaking about their one year anniversary, a wife said “yeah, for our first anniversary, you got us rocking chairs, the rocking chairs I really wanted” (Lauren and Dean). Other participants stated that the anniversary was a good time to give a gift that was functional or useful.

Traditional. Few participants did celebrate with traditional gift exchanges. A couple discussed how the husband followed the traditional gifts every year. One year he wrapped the box that her new piece of jewelry was in with aluminum foil to meet the tin qualification. The husband said that if it was possible for him to incorporate the traditional gift that was called for into the anniversary each year he would do so.

Other couples discussed occasionally integrating traditional gifts, such as silver or bronze. A wife stated that she attempted to follow the traditional gifts, but the suggested gifts were not realistic.

Linda: When we first got married, I started to follow the little rules, you know the first year is paper and then it got to be like bronze, I mean what do you buy a man that is bronze? So I didn't I do that anymore...but I think 25 is diamonds or something so you might have to adhere to that one (Mark and Linda).

No gifts given. Several couples indicated that they did not exchange gifts. Couples gave various reasons why they did not give gifts. Some couples stated that they did not need anything, and so they did not exchange gifts. When asked about gift

exchange a husband replied, “we did but like I said, I mean we have uh so many things now that we just, there’s nothing that we really need” (Dana and Mitch). Another couple recognized that they did not need anything, and so they did not exchange gifts. They consider themselves very fortunate to have all the things they need in life and therefore just keep the exchange to flowers and cards. One couple acknowledged that they do not exchange gifts, but have their own daily or weekly rituals that take the place of gifts. They make a point to do nice things for each other all the time. “For many, many years every Sunday morning he gets up and makes me a really nice breakfast”(Jay and Mia).

Excuse. Several couples used the word ‘excuse’ while discussing exchange and anniversary celebration. Couples said the anniversary was an excuse to take a trip, spend more money on a nicer dinner, and buy each other gifts. A husband stated: “it’s not a big deal about gifts, if there’s something we really want we might use that as an excuse to get it but we’re not like oh I have to buy her a diamond necklace, we don’t do gifts like that” (Lauren and Dean). Other couples discussed how they would buy something for one another and use their anniversary as an excuse to give the gift.

Future plans. Future plans for exchange include vow exchange, giving new stones for the wife’s wedding ring, and new jewelry.

Reminisce

When discussing how participants celebrated their wedding anniversary, they described reminiscing over their previous anniversaries, wedding day, and the course of their relationships. Length of marriages ranged from one year to 65 years.

Acknowledgement of the anniversary occurred almost every year for the participants

regardless of if celebration was involved. They described having a different conversation which reflected remembering the past. Discussion of the first anniversary was prominent, along with description of how daily life impacted their anniversaries.

Acknowledgement of the anniversary. The majority of couples described how they acknowledge their anniversary. A few couples mentioned forgetting their anniversary a year or two, but others stated with pride that they had never forgotten to acknowledge their anniversary. Couples describe the importance of the day did not need a large celebration, but recognition and appreciation of the day and their marriage. A husband said, "It's a special day. We acknowledge the fact that we've been married ever how many years and that's it" (Dana and Mitch). Another husband described recognition of his anniversary as a special day they set aside to recognize each year. It was a day for them to keep in remembrance no matter what means they chose to celebrate the occasion. A couple discussed the importance of taking time out of typical life to recognize the importance of their anniversary. They said:

Dennis- I think an anniversary is good like I said because I think you need to take a little bit of time to just kind of remember and try to refocus yourselves a little bit and I mean that gives you a good excuse or an opportunity to take away from your normal daily life and try to recognize, because it was special and everything.

Laura-I think that no matter how busy your life is that one day you should take time out of that day to just focus on you know even if it is just dinner or a movie or something just to focus on each other and think about you know your relationship and where its been and where you want to go with it I think even if

it's just an hour out of your day you should take some time to focus and recognized (Laura and Dennis).

Rituals. Some couples developed annual rituals as they acknowledged their day. A couple repeated their vows, another couple watched the video of their wedding every year on their anniversary, and a couple sang an anniversary song at dinner every year.

Celebration. As couples reflected remembering their anniversary, they discussed how they celebrated their anniversary. One couple described that they did not celebrate holidays, such as Valentine's Day, but always acknowledged and celebrated their anniversary with dinner. Most couples explained that they had dinner together in honor of their anniversary. Many described how they typically go to a nicer restaurant for their anniversary than they would on a normal basis. Some also talked about getting a little more dressed up to go out for their anniversary and wanting to go to a place that had a little bit nicer/more expensive food and a nice atmosphere. One couple said that having these things makes the meal more romantic. Couples talked about how they celebrated their anniversary by attending a concert, surprise trips, surprise parties, and with friends and family or just the two of them. A couple said:

Mark: It's kind of, the importance of the day is kind of, we prefer to share it with friends I think or it seems like we share it more with friends than we share with just ourselves.

Linda: But we usually have a nice dinner just you and I.

Mark: Sure.

Linda: We either fix a dinner in our home or we go out somewhere for our anniversary, but I think it changes every year because I think sometimes in the past yes we've had friends and other times it's just the two of us but either way its good. (Mark and Linda)

Anniversary conversations. Couples explained the difference in conversations that they had while celebrating their anniversary. They described how they talk about remembering the past, “back when’s,” remembering their wedding day, and the romance involved while talking about their special day. A couple talked about their anniversary conversations by saying that they keep in mind the reason they are there. “We know what the significance of that particular day is and why we are going out” (Beth and Chris). Another couple talked about the romance of focusing on one another and not just talking about everyday stuff. They tried to talk about things that mattered more to them as a couple. A couple who has three children said they try to make a point to not talk about their children while out celebrating their anniversary because they just need a little time to themselves. They went on to say this can be a challenging task at times because their children are such a huge part of their lives together.

First anniversary. Several couples discussed their first anniversary. Half of the participants did not remember how they celebrated their first anniversary, while others remembered eating the top layer of cake saved from their wedding day. Couples described how their first anniversary celebration started annual rituals, such as repeating vows, singing songs, visiting a specific restaurant, and others. Another couple returned to their wedding site in a different state. Reminiscing over couples' first anniversary and wedding day was often associated with anniversary celebrations.

Life. Participants described aspects of their life as it impacted reminiscing over their anniversary and conversations with one another. Addition of children added responsibilities to their lives which impacted the couple's anniversary celebration. Couples talked about how they had to make an effort to not talk about daily life while celebrating their wedding anniversary. As couples were together longer periods of time, they became more comfortable with each other. Couples also reflected on their life achievements and struggles as they reminisced on their anniversary. Other aspects of life impacted reminiscing over their anniversaries. One wife described how her battle with cancer impacted their anniversary celebration and focus on being together. She said:

“I've made a lot of adjustments in 33 years. Yeah, I think um seven years ago eight years ago, I was diagnosed with cancer, and I think in dealing with that one of the things that we fine tuned is really realizing like you're saying, it's just another number, every day is the celebration and when we look at what we put into our jobs, the time commitment, the travel, the reasons to be away from each other, and they are multiple, um, it is just another number and it is probably just another day, and our whole focus really just is being together”(Vince and Cathy).

Results from Married Couples Where One Spouse has a Disability

Participants

One participant in each couple is living with a physical limitation that qualifies them as having a disability. Each of the couples was married at least 15 years before the onset of disability.

Years married. Years married for the four couples in which one spouse is living with a disability ranged from 26-43 years.

Couples ages. Each couple stated their current ages. The youngest participant was 50 and the oldest was 64.

Co-occupation. All of the couples usually do something together to celebrate their anniversary. The couples who involve others in their celebration still talk about how they make that time special for the two of them. At different times in their lives it has been important to celebrate alone or involve others. The age of children was often the deciding factor to celebrate with others or alone.

Involvement of others. Each couple talked about how at some time during their marriage they involved others in the celebration of their anniversary.

Involvement of family. All four couples had in some way involved their children in celebrating their wedding anniversary. Children were often included in the couple's younger years of marriage. But for two of the couples it is still important for their kids to be present. One couple uses their son as a stand in to take his mom out to dinner for their anniversary if his dad is not feeling well. This couple also views their anniversary as a family affair.

Sara: There's been a few times when he just wasn't feeling good and because he never knows from day to day how he's going to feel or if he's going to be able to eat. He would say for our anniversary I would like the son to take you out to olive garden or someplace for lunch or something like that as a stand in. And it would mean as much to him you know as it does for me. That he could do

something that way and feel a part of it. And I think one year he was in the hospital during that time so he told son to make sure he took me out for lunch.

And I thought that was real sweet (Jon and Sara).

Although one couple said they usually tried to leave their twins at home, sometimes they would take them to dinner because they did not eat out very often. One couple has created a ritual of meeting up with their cousins who share the same anniversary day to have dinner and coffee. Two couples talked about the role their parents played in the first five or so years of their marriage. One said they would occasionally use their anniversary weekend to go visit their parents. Another couple received anniversary cards and gifts from their parents since they could not be present to celebrate. “For about the first five years both sides of parent were always really good about giving us an anniversary gift or sending a card or saying happy anniversary on the day” (Ray and Pat). No couples involved others who were not family.

Celebration

Item exchange. All couples participate in some type of exchange in celebration of their wedding anniversary. Cards were given by each couple typically on an annual basis. Currently no couple exchanges gifts each year, although all have at some point in the past. Two of the couples discussed sometimes purchasing a shared gift that both spouses can use or is needed for their home.

Cards. The exchange of cards was something each couple participated in. Usually this exchange occurred annually, especially if the spouse can find a card they like that fits for their spouse. The card exchange almost always took place on the actual anniversary

day even if celebration was postponed until a more convenient time. One wife talked about how she collects the cards and writes the year and how long they have been married inside. Her husband always adds his own words in the card he gives to her. “He adds his own little comment or verse in the card and I always like that. And he would always bring it by work so I would display the flowers with the card” (Ray and Pat).

Gifts. All couples talked about gifts even though none of them currently exchange gifts on an annual basis. One wife always receives flowers at work from her husband on their anniversary but does not count this as a gift. Two of the couples said they will sometimes get a group or shared gift for their anniversary. These gifts were usually something both spouses wanted or could use. Typically they were items for the home.

Disability has caused two husbands to no longer be able to make their wife gifts for their anniversary like they did in the past. One husband used to do woodworking and made things like a swing and family crest. The other husband would cut his wife an emerald gemstone each year on their anniversary since gemstone collecting and cutting was a hobby of theirs.

Jon: I used to cut her a gemstone every anniversary, almost always an emerald.

Sara: Rock hunting has been a family hobby for us through the years and that’s what he was always interested in. And he can still enjoy that. He doesn’t cut them but he cut them for so many years that he can still enjoy the stones, even though he’s not physically cutting them anymore (Jon and Sara).

Rituals. Couples talked about the rituals they created to celebrate their wedding anniversary.

Meals . Having a meal together was a ritual for each couple. Usually this meal was at a nicer restaurant than they would typically eat at on another occasion. Going to different restaurants each year was common with participants. Prior to the onset of disability, one couple would travel outside of their hometown to a larger city that had more restaurants to choose from. Now they tend to stay closer to home.

Carol: Outback, something like that. Typically when we went before we would travel someplace. We would go to Huntington or to Ashland. We didn't think to go to Lexington. We liked to go to Frisch's. We would just take off and go. In comparison to, if we go anywhere now we tend to go somewhere close, local (Jim and Carol).

Involvement of others. One couple has made it an annual ritual to involve their now grown son in their celebration. He serves as the stand in for his father in case he is not feeling well enough to take his wife out to dinner on their anniversary. Taking children along when going out to eat was a common thing in the past for one couple who did not eat out very often and wanted to treat the whole family. For another family, it has become a recent tradition as their college age children now understand the importance of their parent's anniversary and want to share in the celebration.

Gifts. The exchange of gifts, particularly a specific type of gift was mentioned by several participants. One couple had a ritual of the husband buying his wife diamonds every year on their anniversary. This ritual ended when their children were born. Another couple created a ritual out of the husband cutting his wife a gemstone for each

anniversary. This ritual has ended as well because the husband's disability has caused him to become legally blind.

Trips. Trips were mentioned as ways of celebration, but not as something that is done on a big scale anymore. One couple used to take many types of trips for their anniversary such as going camping or renting out a cabin in the Smokey Mountains. Another couple would go visit their family as a means of celebrating their anniversary. One couple has established a new ritual in the past 5-7 years of going to the local amphitheater to watch a show.

Cindy: We don't have a set thing that we do.

Ted: No not really. Several years ago we quit doing the elaborate stuff but we always do something. The last 5, 6, 7 years we try and go to the Jenny Wiley amphitheater in August.

Cindy: Sometime around there, when something we like is playing

Ted: We classify that as our anniversary, a getaway. (Ted and Cindy).

The desire to take special trips in the future was discussed as a means of celebrating an anniversary.

Convenience. Convenience was a factor in many anniversary celebrations either pertaining to when or where the celebration would take place. Because it was sometimes difficult to decide where to eat for their anniversary dinner, one couple would just go to the place that was closest to where ever they were that day. Another couple has to move their anniversary celebration to the weekend before or after because it always falls on the first week of class and interferes with the husband's teaching schedule.

Since disability. Disability has limited some of the activities participants can engage in as a means of celebrating their anniversary. A head injury in addition to diabetic complications has caused one couple to stay home in the 3-4 years since the injury. The husband can no longer drive and does not do well on car trips so it is easier to just stay home and celebrate locally with their children. They hope to be able to do more in future celebrations but stated that it all depends on how he is feeling. Accessibility can sometimes be a challenge for another couple where the husband is confined to a wheelchair. This usually requires the wife to have to call ahead at a restaurant they have not been to before to make sure they can be accommodated. It has also caused them to no longer take trips because of his dialysis three days a week and difficulty of traveling long distances.

Traditional. All participants recognized the list of gifts that are typically given each year as being part of a traditional way of celebrating a wedding anniversary. None of the participants followed this suggested list for more than one or two years. This traditional list was called out dated and items were seen as not useful as one wife said she never liked any of the things suggested and would not have had anything to do with them. One husband was given a little booklet that had all of the suggested traditional gifts listed as a wedding gift but said he has since misplaced it because they never actually used it.

Ray: Yeah that's what comes to mind when I think of traditional. I used to have a notebook that had what you were supposed to give traditionally on each wedding anniversary but I have somehow misplaced that.

Pat: And a lot of times I didn't like the items that were listed. (laughter)

I: So that's not something that you followed?

Ray: No, not closely

I: Were there any years that you actually did?

Ray: Umm I think there were a few

Pat: He got me a card on the first one that was paper along with the diamond so that counted. And I think one year was tin and he gave me a tin can of soup or something like that just to be funny (Ray and Pat).

Trips, second honeymoons and vow renewals were also mentioned as things that come to mind when thinking about traditional ways of celebrating one's wedding anniversary. One of the four couples interviewed considered themselves traditional in the way they celebrate. They based this on how they think others from the same area celebrate.

Ted: I would think we are probably traditional. I don't really know what other people do but most of the people I know that's about what they do. They go out to eat or take in a movie or something. I'm going to say from my perspective that we are probably traditional.

Cindy: For around here anyway (Ted and Cindy).

Non-traditional. Three of the four couples interviewed considered their way of celebration non-traditional. Each had a different reason for giving this answer. One couple went into great detail about why they think of themselves as non-traditional. This label is partly because they have been married so long. They noted that most couples do not stay married past 10 or so years anymore. They also indicated that they would not

want to be traditional because that can be boring. Additionally, the wife does not have high expectations for needing to receive flowers or gifts, she thinks she is nontraditionally thinking as a woman.

Jon: Well, I think we are very nontraditional. Most people don't stay married past 10 years anymore. So no I wouldn't consider us traditional

Sara: I wouldn't either

Jon: I wouldn't want to be traditional

Sara: No and I'm not I don't think, maybe some areas are traditional but I think I'm more nontraditional thinking as a woman. I know a lot of women for instance you know anniversaries can be very sensitive to a lot of people; you know they can cause a lot of problems. I think the expectations and I'm going to speak on the female side are not that they may be out of range to expect a bouquet of flowers or a box of candy are not really forgiving your husband if he forgets, you know the anniversary. And a lot of women are like that and I'm not that way.

Through the early years I wanted to celebrate on that day because I thought if we didn't then it wasn't the same thing but of course that's not true but you just, it was a younger mind of thinking like that.

Jon: And it was based in the 50's when everything was really ritualized. I mean her mother and my mother both had their own expectations probably formed as much by watching I Love Lucy on TV or some programs or things like that, they came to expect it based on programming and we just simply have not accepted programming and just care about each other 24/7 not one day out of 365 (Jon and Sara).

One couple said they are nontraditional because they are not materialistic and do not need to go out and buy one another elaborate gifts or celebrate in a big way to show the significance of their anniversary to one another or others. They don't like to waste things and usually never go out and splurge on anything. The final couple sees themselves as nontraditional because they have never made a big display of their anniversary, not even on the milestone years like 10 or 20. They have always chosen to celebrate it in a low key fashion with just them present.

Planning. All couples discussed how they work together to plan how to celebrate and that plans are usually not made far in advance.

Past planning. All participants stated that the planning of events to celebrate their wedding anniversaries was typically decided upon by both spouses. In one case neither can ever seem to take the lead in planning.

Carol: It was always a fight (laughing). An "I don't care, where do you want to go" kind of thing. A lot of times we would combine it with a mall trip or something. You know when we felt like going shopping and do it that way. Just see what was close, usually a steak house or something like that (Jim and Carol).

While the decision on what to do was usually a joint decision, the wives were almost always the ones who actually made the arrangements of where to go or what to do. These duties included calling the restaurant to make reservations, arranging for child care and deciding which day would be best to celebrate. The majority of the plans were spur of the moment or not made more than a day or two in advance. All couples talked about doing the things that they like to do on their anniversary. No one ever really took

ideas from magazines or television. Instead they did their own things such as going rock hunting or camping or just staying home and enjoying each other's company.

Future planning. All couples discussed things they would like to do in the future as a way of celebrating their anniversary. None of the couples have any future plans set in stone. Two of the couples would like to take trips to a place they have always wanted to go. Another couple says they are very low key and don't make plans that far in advance but that they would like to have a surprise party for their 50th anniversary and invite all their family and friends. The last couple does not make any type of future plans because of the husband's poor health. They talked about taking life one day at a time and would be more likely to just up and go somewhere rather than planning anything.

How anniversary is made special. Each couples touched on how they make their anniversary special when compared to any other time they make go out to dinner or go to a show. Each had their own views about what makes the anniversary celebration special. Couples will go to nicer places, especially nicer restaurants than they typically do on other occasions. One wife talked about how she always dresses up to go out for their anniversary because it reminds her of getting all dressed up for their wedding. Additionally the meaning behind the outing makes it more special. The day brings back memories of the wedding day and of past anniversary celebrations.

Pat: I always dressed up on our anniversary where as any other day I might just wear jeans or something.

Ray: It's more special because of the meaning that is attached to it. Your anniversary is always a special day. It brings back memories of that first day, the day you were married (Ray and Pat).

Another couple said that dinner or going to a show is no different than any other day aside from the meaning behind going. They don't do anything differently during the meal or show. They see it as an opportunity to do something together on that special day.

Exchange

All couples discussed some type of exchange that take place either on their anniversary or in conjunction with celebrating the anniversary. All couples said they exchange cards, some annually and some when they find the right card. None currently exchange gifts but one couple did before they had children. Two couples talked about purchasing a shared gift that both spouses want or need.

Cards. All couples exchange cards as part of their anniversary celebration. Although for one couple it was not always annually, the card exchange always took place on the actual anniversary day even when the celebration occurred at another time. Even during years that the couple did not really celebrate, they still exchanged cards. For one couple cards are part of the annual ritual they started with their first anniversary and have continued every year. "I buy a card every year. I collect them and I put the year and number of years that we have been married on the inside of the card" (Ray and Pat).

Gifts. Two couples said they got a group or shared gift. Usually these are items both spouses can use. Both couples said these shared gifts were usually for the house. Examples include getting a new bed and purchasing various household items.

Carol: often times we will do a group gift together, something that we can both use. What were you talking about? You mentioned something the other day? Oh, he wants a camera. He wants a camera so that I can take pictures with the camera. Let's see we've gotten things from a pressure washer or just something we feel like, to a tiller.

Interviewer: So it's things that you need

Carol: Things that we both need (Jim and Carol).

None of the couples ever exchanged the traditional recommended gifts aside from paper for the first year. One couple commented that they did not follow the list except for the 25th but might do so for their 50th because the wife has items from her parent's 50th wedding anniversary celebration. The couple picked out a Precious Moments figurine that was dated and said 25th anniversary on it to display on their mantel. Prior to his disability, one husband cut his wife an emerald gemstone each year for their anniversary. He would find the rock himself on one of their rock hunting trips and then cut her a special stone each anniversary. One couple said the husband used to buy his wife diamonds every year before their children were born but no longer exchange gifts.

Future plans. None of the couples have any future plans set in stone. Two of the couples would like to take trips to a place they have always wanted to go. Another couple says they are very low key and don't make plans that far in advance but that they would

like to have a surprise party for their 50th anniversary and invite all their family and friends. The last couple does not make any type of future plans because of the husband's poor health. They talked about taking life one day at a time and would be more likely to just up and go somewhere rather than planning anything.

Interviewer: So do you have any plans in the future for what you might like to do on your anniversaries?

Sara: No because I believe very strongly we only take one day at a time. The Lord only gives us today and that's all.

Jon: That's guaranteed and you're not even guaranteed that. I've learned that long range planning, there's nothing wrong with that but I don't think about 5 years down the road what we would do for our anniversary. Or even next year. I'm just thankful for each day we have.

Sara: I don't know that we have ever made any long range plans other than within a few months.

Interviewer: So you usually don't plan very far ahead?

Sara: No we've never been one that's say next year we are going to Myrtle Beach

Jon: if we wanted to do that we would pack up the car and go (Jon and Sara).

Reminisce

When participants discussed celebration of their wedding anniversary they described reminiscing about previous anniversaries, how they met, their wedding day and how time has shaped their lives together. Each couple acknowledged their anniversary each year in some way. Exchanging cards and eating out for dinner were common among

all couples. Even if the couple did not do anything for an official celebration of their anniversary such as dinner or a trip, they still acknowledged the day and the meaning behind it.

Acknowledgement of the anniversary. Each couple described how they acknowledge their anniversary. All participants talked about the need to acknowledge the day but not to have any extravagant celebration. Having a low key, family oriented celebration was most common. The most important thing was to just be together on that day and do something both spouses wanted to do. One couple described their celebration by saying “I don’t think we ever did really do anything blow out style or anything. We always did something, but nothing drastic or over the top. A lot of times we just went together and got stuff for the house” (Ted and Cindy).

Another couple talked about acknowledging their anniversary while the wife was at work. It became a ritual for the husband to send flowers to her at work so she could display them as a reminder of the day. She would also display her card on her desk for others to see. Additionally she would wear her anniversary gift to work on that day. Another couple discussed how they met and the early years of their marriage by saying “No matter where we were or how busy we were, we always took time to remember our anniversary” (Jon and Sara).

Rituals. Creating their own ritual or tradition was a way participants celebrated their anniversary. One couple made it a ritual to exchange cards each year. Another created several rituals that lasted for a few years and then evolved into something else. They began their marriage by the husband buying his wife diamonds each year in

addition to sending flowers and a card to her at work. Now the ritual has evolved into sending the flowers and exchanging a card but no longer giving gifts. Another couple has made it a ritual to involve their son in their anniversary celebrations as they taught him from a young age the importance of celebrating a wedding anniversary.

Celebration. As couples discussed the celebration of their anniversary they reflected on going out to dinner, taking trips and spending time with family. Having dinner together and exchanging cards was expressed as a means of celebration by each couple. A couple told stories about memorable things that had happened to them on their anniversary. One story was of a trip the husband won:

Jim: I remember on one anniversary I won a trip to uh to the French quarters in Lexington. I don't know what it's called now. That was before there were kids or anything. And that was really nice. There were suites and everything, the rooms were really nice and it had the hot tub in the room and everything. There was this little tiny bottle of bubble bath you know and so I put the whole bottle in the tub and I mean it was like everywhere (laughing).

Carol: There were bubbles everywhere. We always laugh about that trip (Jim and Carol).

Involvement of children in the celebration was important to all participants. One couple described how meaningful it was to them to have their son understand the meaning behind celebrating an anniversary and what being married means. The wife especially always thought it was really important that their son understood the meaning of an anniversary between parents and wanted him to be part of it. When the son was in

junior high school he asked to go to the store so he could pick his parents out an anniversary gift. He chose to buy a set of champagne fluted glasses that his parents could use to drink sparkling cider on their anniversary. The wife still has the box and the glasses which they pull out to use on occasion on their anniversary. “I’ve always thought it was really important that your children realize as they are growing up they realize what an anniversary is” (Jon and Sara).

First anniversary. Several couples recalled how they celebrated on their first wedding anniversary. One couple could not remember exactly what they did because it was so long ago. A couple reminisced how they spontaneously ate at a hot dog stand after they finished university classes and work that day because it was close and quick. It turned out to be one of their fondest anniversary memories. Another couple briefly talked about the disappointment of their first anniversary and attributes that unpleasant experience to why they never plan any celebrations now.

Ted: Our first anniversary we were playing softball and I kind of messed that one up.

Cindy: That may be a part of why we never did have big celebrations

Ted: I planned too much on that one and it just did not work out (Ted and Cindy).

Life. Progression through life was discussed as it related to children being born and growing up and to the acquisition of disability of one of the spouses. Over the years the spouses had become more comfortable with one another and for the most part had settled into a routine. Disability completely threw off this routine and caused the couples

to adapt. The spouse of a man who is now wheelchair bound described life now as learning to live with the disability and to take each day as it comes.

Jon: It's made you realize that I could be here one day and not be here the next

Sara: It's made us do things different

Jon: Of course I knew that all along, but it's brought that home. But these days I'm just thankful that I get up in the morning and feel good because that about a 50% proposition or maybe less

Sara: I take great comfort and joy in the fact that he enjoys and loves what he does in his profession and to me that takes care of everything else because a lot of people who become physically challenged have a difficult time and realizing that they still have each day that they can feel accomplished and because of the frustrations of the physical limitations and illnesses they deal with you get depressed. You feel down because you can't do this or can't do that and that's very normal and I think that I see myself as wanting to be the cheerleader for him (Jon and Sara).

Marriage

Relationship. Three of the four couples talked about some kind of change in their relationship as the marriage progressed. Two of the four spoke on how they try to show their love for one another all the time instead of saving it for one day each year.

Changes over time. The lengths of marriages in years were: 26, 31, 38, and 43. One couple talked about getting more used to one another over the years. They have grown more comfortable with each other and therefore do not have to make such a big

deal out of their anniversary as they did in the early years. Now they do not necessarily have to do anything to celebrate except enjoy themselves together. Another couple talked about growth and evolving in marriage as well as in ways of celebrating all holidays including their anniversary. Because they have been married such a long time they've done a variety of different things over the years and are still evolving and changing.

The final couple discussed how the actual day does not hold as much importance because now that their kids are grown they get to spend more time together on a regular basis. They actually think they do more now to celebrate than they did when kids were young because they do not have as many responsibilities to attend to.

Interviewer: How do you think your anniversary has changed over the years? Are there things you did when you were younger that you don't do so much anymore?

Cindy: It's probably become less important, I guess the actual day

Ted: Well I don't know if important is the word but

Cindy: The actual day is less important

Ted: Yeh, we don't do less stuff or anything

Cindy: Probably since the girls left home we actually do more, just me and you on our anniversary

Ted: Yeah I think we do (Ted and Cindy)

Display of love for one another. Two of the couples mentioned how they try to act as though each day were their anniversary and to celebrate their marriage every day. One spouse said that anniversaries are all about caring and sharing and not to be selfish which is how a couple should strive to act on a daily basis.

Routines. Routines were discussed in relation to how the couple functions on a day to day basis because that routine also impacts their anniversary celebration. Routine shifts as children are born and grow. All couples now have adult children so they do not have the same time constraints placed upon their daily routine as they did when their children were smaller. Different jobs and moving to new locations were also part of the routine for one couple who has lived in many different places over the course of their marriage. When talking about the shifting of routines within marriage, one couple said: “Children come along, you’re working, you’re not living in the same area and you find that you do things different or have other opportunities that you take advantage of” (Jon and Sara).

Responsibilities. Each couple talked about their anniversary in relation to their kids. Did they include their children in the celebration or did they have to find someone to watch the kids so they could celebrate alone? One wife discussed how they now have to put their kids first and take care of their needs before they can go buy gifts for one another on an anniversary. Before kids they did not have to worry about that.

Changing roles. Disability has changed the roles in the relationship of each couple. One wife talked about how since her husband’s disability has confined him to a wheelchair she has to do more for him which requires more strength from her. She went on to say that marriage is a team effort and that you are supposed to stick together no matter the circumstances. “I don’t see it as an ordeal. I see it just as us working together as a team, which as a married couple that’s what you are supposed to do anyway” (Jon and Sara).

Two of the couples have had to deal with the husband no longer being able to work which has put a strain on them financially. The roles for them have shifted because in both instances the husband was the one bringing in more money and was the insurance provider. Now each wife is acting as the sole financial provider for the family. The other couple, in which the wife suffered a stroke, has seen her role as housewife shift. Her husband now has to do or help with laundry, do the vacuuming and make the majority of the meals.

Cindy: Ted has to do a lot more of the cooking and helping around the house and laundry I'm not able to do so he's stepped up and done a whole lot of that stuff. But it's just an adjustment. But for anniversaries we still try to make plans like we always did. Just like going on vacation. It's different because there's things I can't do. Like, he has to help me walk in the sand and stuff like that more than he used to (Ted and Cindy).

Financial responsibilities. Two of the couples mentioned financial reasons as to why they have not celebrated their anniversaries as much over the past few years, since the onset of disability. "You have retired due to your disability so that has decreased our income and limits us going out of town and eating out and doing things like that we used to do" (Ray and Pat).

Children. All couples have children. Children impacted each of the marriages and how wedding anniversaries were celebrated. The age of children were taken into consideration in how the couple would celebrate. When the children were younger the couples often wanted to make the anniversary more about themselves and did not involve

the kids. Once the children were older, couples were more likely to involve the children in their celebration. Older children also afforded more choices for what the couples could do to celebrate as child care was not a factor.

Celebration day. Each couple reminisced about what they do to celebrate the anniversary of their wedding day.

Convenience . When planning the anniversary celebration, waiting to celebrate at a more convenient time often occurred. In the past it had been more important to celebrate on the actual anniversary day, but over the years couples have grown to celebrate at a more convenient time. Postponing the celebration to the weekend after was common due to work schedules. One couple discussed the things they have to take into consideration when planning to celebrate due to the husband being in a wheelchair. He has difficulty accessing some places, so they tend to choose where to go based on if they know he can easily get there. Because of this they told a story of eating at a special restaurant they had wanted to try 6 months before their actual anniversary but said it was their anniversary dinner. Because it was something they had wanted to do but was too far to make a return trip they simply celebrated early, at the more convenient time. Another couple said they often choose where to eat based on what is most convenient or close to where they are at the time. However, they have not been able to go out to celebrate an anniversary since the husband's injury.

Carol: It's probably been since before the head injury, since before 2009 that we actually did something for our anniversary. Hopefully we will get to do maybe a dinner or something this year, but it just depends on how he feels (Jim and Carol).

External factors. Disability was the main external factor that impacts the wedding anniversary celebration day. Couples are now more limited in the places they can go and the money they can spend on celebration.

Interviewer: Do you think that since you have acquired your disability has it caused you to change the way you celebrate?

Jim: Oh yeah

Interviewer: How so

Jim: The trips, we don't take the trips and the cash flow is just not there.

Carol: In part due to the economy.

Jim: Not that it costs a lot to go to Huntington but with gas and then you eat at a nicer steakhouse or at the lobster place and you're looking at two people probably \$50 and that's just not cash that we can throw away on something like that. We do have a house payment still (Jim and Carol).

Travel has become a problem for two couples as it is now more difficult to travel out of town or takes trips due to the long car ride. Accessibility in a building such as a restaurant can also be an issue. The health of the disabled husband factored into one couple's decision of how to celebrate the past few years because he does not have very many days where he feels like going out. His health has altered the couple's plans so that their son fills in on the anniversary day and takes his mom out to eat. These external factors played a role in helping couples to see that they do not have to restrict celebrating their anniversary to just the one day.

Planning. Planning was not usually something that was considered when celebrating a wedding anniversary. No one usually planned very far in advance, maybe just a couple days or a week at the most. But most celebrations happened on the spur of the moment or were decided up on the actual day of the celebration. All couples said the decision making as to what they would do or where they would go was a joint decision made by discussion among both spouses. Back and forth discussion of well where do you want to go, no where do you want to go was common. When making plans such as reservations at a show or restaurant, the wife was typically the one who placed them.

Disability

Physical limitations associated with having a disability results in deficits or difficulties in many areas of the individual's life. These limitations impact not only the individual's daily activities but also the activities they engage in with others such as the celebration of their wedding anniversary.

Limitations in activities of daily living. Physical disability associated with a closed head injury and neuropathy as a result of diabetes creates an array of deficits that affect one participants abilities. Everyday tasks become much more difficult and require more time to accomplish. He experiences walking difficulties which results in frequent falls, impaired vision, trouble sleeping leading to days at a time without sleep, poor short term memory and decreased reaction time. All of these impact activities of daily living. Financial issues are also a result as this husband and father can no longer work due to his injury. Another participant had a stroke in the cerebral cortex 12 years ago resulting in balance difficulties, not being able to walk more than a couple steps unassisted, speech

impairment, vestibular issues, double vision, and overall muscle weakness. Although she is able to stay home alone while her husband is at work, she is no longer able to work or drive and needs help washing hair and doing housework. She is unable to do laundry or vacuum and dust. Another participant who has a pretty severe case of COPD is also no longer able to work in his lawn care business leaving his wife to be the sole financial provider. He can still function independently but cannot run or walk long distances or exert himself too much due to shortness of breath. It takes him at least twice as long to do tasks such as yard work or house cleaning because he must take frequent breaks. Even dressing can be taxing. The final participant who has a disability is on dialysis 15 hours a week. He is confined to wheelchair due to leg atrophy and has very poor vision. He can no longer engage in his hobby of gem cutting, cannot take care of the yard or pool, and has finds getting around the house to be difficult.

Impact on anniversary. When asked how the disability has affected the way the couple celebrates their wedding anniversary, one couple said it has no impact on their anniversary.

Ted: The fact of the stroke hasn't changed anything in the way we celebrate our anniversary.

Cindy: No

Ted: We started doing that years ago, years before the stroke

Cindy: I don't really think the stroke affected anniversaries a whole lot at all.

Ted: I don't think so. We still go out and eat. Go someplace to eat or something

Cindy: Go to the movies sometimes. We still go to Myrtle Beach or somewhere for vacation (Ted and Cindy).

They then went on to say that the only different they see in their anniversary celebration is that they may have to plan a little bit more to do things but still do all of the same things. Another couples said the main impact from the disability on their anniversary celebration is the inability to take trips and the financial aspects associated with trips. Part of the reason is due to the poor economy and rising costs of traveling but his injury now prevents most long distance trips and makes even shorter ones difficult compared to before the disability.

The spouse with the least physically involved physical limitation, COPD, says he cannot think of anything involving their wedding anniversary that is impacted by his disability. His wife pointed out that without his income money is tighter preventing them from going out of town or out to eat as much as they would have done in the past. Both said this did not bother them or take away from their anniversary celebration. The couple facing the most involved physical disability resulting in the use of a wheelchair talked about how they now have to scope out new places to make sure he can comfortably get into it. But other than that they did not feel like his disability has affected the way they celebrate their anniversary.

Impact of Disability on Celebration of Wedding Anniversary

Through open coding, themes and subthemes were developed to analyze the data gathered. The same open codes were used for both the interviews conducted with typical couples (15 interviews) and with the couples in which one spouse has a disability (four interviews). One additional code, titled “Disability” was added to the second set of interviews to describe the limitations and impact on the anniversary celebration. While

many of the subthemes also remained the same, a couple were omitted and others added to account for the differences that emerged within the data. Under the convenience subtheme of the celebration code a category of “since disability” was added to compare the couple’s need for convenience before the disability to that post disability. The “excuse” subtheme in the exchange theme was omitted because none of the participants in the disability interviews used the term excuse in their descriptions of anniversary celebration. Also in the exchange theme, the subtheme of “anniversary conversations” was omitted due to no couples speaking of what they talk about during their anniversary conversations.

The theme of marriage was most changed between the first and second set of interviews. In the disability interviews sub-sub themes of “perseverance” under the subtheme relationship, “work” and “housework and children” under the responsibilities subtheme, and “celebration “ and “family” under the children subtheme. Other sub-sub themes were added to address new data that arose in the disability interviews. Added under the relationship subtheme was “Routines” to discuss the shifting of routines as length of marriage increases and disability occurs. “Financial responsibilities” were added under the responsibilities subtheme due to financial implications affecting anniversary celebrations.

The four couples interviewed where one of the spouses is living with a disability gives evidence to compare and contrast how the couples celebrate their wedding anniversaries. From this data we can determine if disability affects the rituals associated with an anniversary celebration. Overall the data reveals that there is not a significant difference in the way this group of couples celebrate their anniversary when compared to

couples who do not have a disability. The main difference occurs when couples talk about finances. Those with a disability cited financial reasons as to why they may not celebrate their anniversary. One couple had not celebrated since the husband suffered a head injury almost four years ago due to the financial burden incurred from his medical bills. Another couple talked about toning down their celebrations because the husband has retired since his breathing difficulties made it impossible to continue working full time in his line of work. Considerations for accessibility was a concern raised by one couple because the husband is in a wheelchair and cannot go to some places that they used to, such as a cabin in the Smokey Mountains. This is something the couples without disability did not have to worry about.

Each couple with a disability was asked directly if they think the disability has affected the way they celebrate their anniversary. Each couple answered that the disability had not significantly affected their means of celebration. It may have slightly altered the way in which they celebrate but has not prevented from doing anything that they have really wanted to do. Only one of the four couples said yes the disability has changed some aspect about the way they celebrate. This couple pointed out that taking trips has been adversely affected by the husband's disability as he now has difficulty tolerating even short car rides. Therefore, the trips that the couple used to like to take have been greatly reduced. They now stay local when celebrating instead of driving to a larger city with more choices of restaurants and entertainment.

The other three couples talked about some alteration they had made following the disability, although they did not directly say it had impacted their celebration. One couple said the only difference they see is that they may have to plan a little bit more to do

things but still do all of the same things. Another couple said the main impact from the disability is the inability to take trips. The spouse with the least severe physical limitation, COPD, says he cannot think of anything involving their anniversary that has been impacted by his disability. But his wife pointed out that without his income, money is tighter preventing them from going out of town or out to eat as much as they would have done in the past. A husband who is now forced to use a wheelchair talked about how they now have to scope out new places to make sure he can comfortably get into it. But other than that they did not feel like his disability has affected the way they celebrate their anniversary.

However, from an onlooker's perspective it is easy to see that adaptations and changes have occurred in the ways each couple celebrates their anniversary. Their perceptions are quite different as they do not see the same differences that are evident to others. For example, the couple who now has their son stand in if the husband does not feel well enough to go out did not do this prior to the husband acquiring a disability. Yes, the son was always involved in the celebration, but never without the husband being there also.

Overall results show that there are differences between how typical couples and those where one spouse has a disability celebrate their wedding anniversaries. The perspective of how those couples view themselves and how onlookers view their celebrations is very different. The couples with a disability do not really think they have changed their celebrations since the disability. However based on their conversations, each couple had things they do differently or have altered since onset of the disability.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The Problem

Currently in occupational science and occupational therapy literature, there is little to no evidence available concerning the annual celebratory rituals associated with how a married couple celebrates their wedding anniversaries. This ritual can be very important in defining how the couple interacts and what is meaningful to them. As this study revealed, many couples used their marriage and daily lives to frame their anniversary celebrations meaning that knowledge about the anniversary ritual can reveal a great deal about the couple and the individual spouses. Spousal support literature that is available through various medical professions speaks to the role of the spouse as caregiver and typically focuses on the stresses of that caregiving role. No literature was found that looked at the effects of providing spousal support/caregiving on the couple, especially as it pertains to celebration of annual rituals. Additionally no research was found describing the impact of a disability to one spouse on the way annual rituals, such as the wedding anniversary, are celebrated.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to first describe how married couples who were born, raised, and currently reside in the United States celebrate their wedding anniversaries. This data was then compared to that from married couples where one spouse has a disability resulting in physical limitations to determine if the presence of a disability alters the way married couples celebrate their wedding anniversaries. This

research will help professionals gain access to an often private aspect of a couple's lives that can help better understand how to include the spouse of someone with a disability during their rehabilitation/recovery process. Knowledge of the annual rituals, such as wedding anniversary celebrations, each client celebrates can afford therapists an opportunity to incorporate more meaningful activities into their therapy services.

Relationship to the Literature

Statements made by participants in this study support wedding anniversaries as an occupation. Actions are unique to that one point in time and take part under certain temporal, spatial, social, and cultural contexts. A couple's reflection of their past anniversaries illustrates that their anniversary serves as an occupation, actually a co-occupation, between the spouses. Each anniversary reminisced on was different and special in its own way. Each also carried different meaning to the spouses.

Similarly, results of the study add to the literature on rituals. The lack of available evidence identifying the anniversary celebration as a ritual has been addressed by this study. Through their discussion of wedding anniversaries both past and future, participants solidified the wedding anniversary as a ritual by describing how its presence is acknowledged every year and that typically there is a set means of celebration that is observed. Some couples talked about creating their own traditions. Based on their descriptions of what the participants termed "traditions", their actions fit the definition of ritual both in the AOTA Practice Framework and as defined by Pierce in the occupational science literature. Although no couple used the term ritual when describing their anniversary celebration, their descriptions of going to the same restaurant each year and

exchanging cards on their anniversary also aligns with accepted definitions of ritual across multiple disciplines. The individualized experience that is repeated over time applies to rituals and fills a gap in the literature where rituals were not previously addressed. Rituals were an important part of the anniversary celebration as identified by all participants. Each couple had something special that was unique to them that they did to celebrate. Whether it was going out to eat at a nicer restaurant, watching their wedding video with their children or taking a trip, each couple identified a ritual of meaning used as a means of celebration.

Most of the couples interviewed in the study involved their family in some way into their anniversary celebration. Families like that of, Will and Barb who have been married 65 years, know they will be having a big family get together for a meal each year to celebrate the anniversary. In this case the annual ritual provides an identity to the individuals who make up that family as a family unit who finds meaning in the same ritual. This sense of creating family meaning through ritual adds to research done by DeGrace (2003) on the importance of family centered care to the family dynamic.

Spousal support literature shows a positive effect on health and well-being of a disabled individual when they receive help and encouragement from their spouse. The interviews done with couples in which one spouse has a disability adds to this literature by showing that teamwork and small adaptations can help the couple lead as normal a life as possible. All four couples with one spouse who has a disability made some kind of adaptation or alteration, although only one couple identified this as an impact of the disability, to the way they celebrate their anniversary. Yet none of the spouses showed an indication this had affected their marriage or means of celebration as they still do all the

same things they used to. The stress that is often associated with disability was not apparent in these individuals as they seemed comfortable in their roles and rituals.

Further relationships to current literature were unable to be made due to the lack of evidence available on wedding anniversaries, particularly as they relate to occupational science and occupational therapy. The lack of evidence on this topic was one of the main purposes of conducting this research. This new study provides information on wedding anniversaries as rituals and explores the similarities and differences present in the ways couples with and without a physical disability celebrate their anniversaries. Impact on the anniversary celebration as a result of disability was of particular interest. This study fills a gap where previous research was lacking.

Significance of Study

This study will add to occupational science and occupational therapy literature and offer empirical evidenced based data regarding social and cultural celebratory occupations in observance of married couples' wedding anniversaries. In addition, it will determine if / how presence of a disability to one partner has any effect on how the married couple celebrates their wedding anniversaries. It fills an important gap in the literature that tends to look at the way rituals affect families, particularly when looking at daily routines or disruption of routines for a family when a child has a disability such as an autism spectrum disorder.

This research study will help professionals better understand annual rituals of married couples associated with celebrating their wedding anniversaries. By understanding this often private aspect of a couple's marriage, therapists will be able to

better understand how to include the spouse of a client into rehabilitation or treatment. Understanding the rituals of a couple can provide them with things to look forward to during rehabilitation and personalize treatment. By learning these aspects of the client's life, an occupational therapist can make sure the client has the skills, endurance, and strength to engage in meaningful ritual.

Implications for Occupational Therapy

Rehabilitation and the need for an occupational therapist are necessary for the treatment of many diseases or injuries. Occupational therapists often operate or strive to operate under a family centered care model which strives to incorporate the family into care for a client receiving services. The family can serve as a motivator for the client to be compliant and focus on recovery or treatment. By working with one client, an occupational therapist has the potential to influence the occupations of an entire family. It is critical for occupational therapists to consider the needs of the couple together to aide in the rehabilitation process. Research finds that occupational therapists should address meaningful occupations of the family as a whole. Celebrating a wedding anniversary can be very meaningful to a couple and one that if missed would interrupt their annual rituals. This is an area the occupational therapist can address to ensure the couple can still engage in occupations that are meaningful to them. If it is an annual ritual for the husband to cook dinner for his wife on their anniversary, but he has suffered a stroke and cannot do this independently, the occupational therapist can step in and assist the man in cooking dinner. Allowing a married couple to engage in their annual wedding anniversary ritual despite disability can help to restore a sense of normalcy in the couple's life.

Limitations

One limitation to this study is the small sample size. The first phase of the study involved 15 couples (30 participants) and the second phase was done with four couples (eight participants). The study was conducted using a convenience sampling with all participants residing in central or eastern Kentucky at the time of their interview. The sample size and limited geographical region of participants means the results may not be generalizable to other couples or geographic areas. Another limitation to consider is whether or not the couple's answers to interview question would have been the same if each spouse had been interviewed separately.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research needs to be conducted to determine if application of the current research study can benefit couples receiving occupational therapy services. Studying the recovery times and enjoyment of occupational therapy activities could determine if knowing about annual rituals and applying that knowledge in practice can aid in the treatment process. Research could be particularly beneficial in the area of stroke rehabilitation.

Due to the limited geographical region study participants represented, it would be advisable to conduct a larger study that spanned geographic regions. Based on feedback from presentation of this topic at both local and national meetings, it was suggested that the findings may be culturally biased. Individuals from other regions of the United States discussed how no one they knew celebrated in the same manner as was predominant in the study. The exchange of cards, for example, was something many from outside the

region said they did not participate in. However, sharing a meal together seemed to be a common thread across regions based on several conversations with interested scholars. Therefore it would be advised to expand the study to other parts of the country and cover differing cultural backgrounds with which to make a comparison.

An additional area of study that would be of interest is the impact of disability on newly disabled couples as compared to those who have been living with the disability for some time. Would data be different if couples who were experiencing a new disability were interviewed as opposed to those who have become accustomed to the changes? Any impact on the celebration of wedding anniversaries would more likely be fresh in the minds of a couple just one to two years post disability whereas couples five or more years after disability may have adapted and no longer see those changes as an impact. Since all of the couples in this study who have a spouse with a disability had celebrated four anniversaries since the onset of disability, their lack of identifying impact of the disability on anniversary celebrations could be due to new rituals they now have in place.

References

- Ade-Ridder, L. (1985). Quality of marriage: A comparison between golden wedding couples and couples married less than fifty years. *Lifestyles*, 7(4), 224-237. doi:10.1007/BF00997103.
- American Occupational Therapy Association. (2008). *Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain & process*. (2nd ed.). Bethesda, MD: AOTA Press.
- Briller, S., & Sankar, A. (2011). The Changing Roles of Ritual in Later Life. *Generations*, 35(3), 6-10.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London, England: SAGE Productions.
- Clark, F., Sanders, K., Carlson, M., Blanche, E., & Jackson, J. (2007). Synthesis of habit theory. *OTJR: Occupation, Participation & Health*, 27, 7S-23s.
- Crespo, C., Davide, I. N., Costa, M., & Fletcher, G. O. (2008). Family rituals in married couples: Links with attachment, relationship quality, and closeness. *Personal Relationships*, 15(2), 191-203. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.2008.00193.x
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Dagan, M., Sanderman, R., Schokker, M. C., Wiggers, T., Baas, P. C., van Haastert, M., & Hagedoorn, M. (2011). Spousal Support and Changes in Distress Over Time in Couples Coping With Cancer: The Role of Personal Control. *Journal Of Family Psychology*, 25(2), 310-318. doi:10.1037/a0022887

- DeGrace, B.W. (2003). Occupation-based and family-centered care: A challenge for current practice. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 59(3), 347-350.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications
- De Ridder, D. D., Schreurs, K. G., & Kuijer, R. G. (2005). Is spousal support always helpful to patients with asthma or diabetes? A prospective study. *Psychology & Health*, 20(4), 497-508. doi:10.1080/14768320500098699
- Dickstein, S. (2002). Family Routines and Rituals--The Importance of Family Functioning: Comment on the Special Section. *Journal Of Family Psychology*, 16(4), 441-444. doi:10.1037//0893-3200.16.4.441
- Fiese, B. H. (2007). Routines and rituals: Opportunities for participation in family health. *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*, 27(Suppl.), 41S-49S.
- Fiese, B. H., Foley, K. P., & Spagnola, M. (2006). Routine and ritual elements in family mealtimes: Contexts for child well-being and family identity. *New Directions For Child & Adolescent Development*, 2006(111), 67-89. doi:10.1002/cad.155
- Fiese, B. H., Tomcho, T. J., Douglas, M., Josephs, K., Poltrock, S., & Baker, T. (2002). A Review of 50 Years of Research on Naturally Occurring Family Routines and Rituals: Cause for Celebration?. *Journal Of Family Psychology*, 16(4), 381-390. doi:10.1037//0893-3200.16.4.381
- Hocking, C., Pierce, D., Shordike, A., Wright-St. Clair, V., Bunrayong, W., Vittayakorn, S., & Rattakorn, P. (2008). The promise of internationally collaborative research

for studying occupation: The example of the older women's food preparation study. *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research: Occupation, Participation, and Health*, 28, 180-190.

Holicky, R., & Charlifue, S. (1999). Ageing with spinal cord injury: the impact of spousal support. *Disability & Rehabilitation*, 21(5/6), 250-257.

doi:10.1080/096382899297675

Kearns, J., & Kenneth, E. (2004). Social networks, structural interdependence, and marital quality over the transition to marriage: A prospective analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 18(2), 393-395. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.18.2.383

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (2005). Making marriage visible: Wedding anniversaries as the public component of private relationships. *Text*, 25(5), 595-631.

doi:10.1515/text.2005.25.5.595.

Marquenie, K., Rodger, S., Mangohig, K., & Cronin, A. (2011). Dinnertime and bedtime routines and rituals in families with a young child with an autism spectrum disorder. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 58(3), 145-154.

doi:10.1111/j.1440-1630.2010.00896.x

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (n.d.). ritual. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ritual>

Mutch, K. (2010). In sickness and in health: experience of caring for a spouse with MS. (Cover story). *British Journal Of Nursing*, 19(4), 214-219.

- Peterson, Y. (1979). The Impact of Physical Disability on Marital Adjustment: A Literature Review. *Family Coordinator*, 28(1), 47.
- Pierce, D. (2001). Untangling occupation and activity. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 55, 138-146.
- Puterbaugh, D. T. (2008, September). Rituals in Relationships. *USA Today Magazine*. pp. 68-71.
- Searson, R. R., Hendry, A. M., Ramachandran, R. R., Burns, A. A., & Purandare, N. N. (2008). Activities enjoyed by patients with dementia together with their spouses and psychological morbidity in carers. *Aging & Mental Health*, 12(2), 276-282. doi:10.1080/13607860801956977
- Shordike, A. & Pierce, D. (2005). Cooking up Christmas in Kentucky: Occupation and tradition in the stream of time. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 12(3), 140-148. <http://www.jos.edu.au/default.asp>
- Solomon, C. (2007). Family Routines and Rituals - Edited by Barbara H. Fiese. *Journal Of Marriage & Family*, 69(2), 553-554. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2007.00389.x
- Wilson, J. (2007). A wedding anniversary guide: History, gifts, & etiquette. Retrieved December 5, 2010, from: <http://searchwarp.com/swa222099.htm>
- World Health Organization. (2001) International classification of functioning, disability, and health. Geneva, Switzerland.
- Yatzak, J. (2011). The Power of Ritual and Hobbies: Engaging in Favorite Pastimes Can Help People with Dementia. *Generations*, 35(3), 71-73.

Appendix A:

Interview protocol for interviews with married couples where one spouse has a disability
resulting in physical limitations

Describing Observances of Wedding Anniversaries among Married Couples Living in the United States

Research Question: **How do married couples in the United States celebrate wedding anniversaries when one partner is living with a disability?**

Opening question

Tell me your name, your date of birth, how long have you been together and married, and where you currently live.

Which one of you has a disability, what it is and when did it occur (before or after marriage).

Tell me a little bit about your disability, what difficulties or limitations do you face, etc.?

Key questions

1. How do you celebrate your wedding anniversary? (Tell me the story)
 - Most recent year?
 - Past years: how has it changed?
 - Are there any years that were very significant, and if so, why?
 - Special places, vacations, foods, other people, gifts, that you do annually?
 - Do you celebrate on the actual day or wait until a more convenient day?
 - Do you celebrate for the whole day/wk, or primarily at one time of the day?
2. Who usually plans the activities for your anniversary?
 - Together or individually?
 - When do you start planning?
 - How do you get ideas?
3. If you do something you've done previously, how is it different when celebrating the current anniversary?
4. Are you familiar with traditional or historical ways of celebrating anniversaries?
 - What do you think about the traditional ways?
 - How is your celebration traditional or nontraditional?
5. Do you have future plans for your anniversaries?
6. How does your disability affect the way you celebrate your anniversary or does it?

(If disability occurred after marriage, how do your celebrations differ from the anniversary celebrations prior to the disability?)

Closing questions

- Is there anything about your anniversary celebrations that we have not discussed, and which it would help me to know?

We've talked about a lot of things today. Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your participation.