

# Fact Sheet: Occupation focused models in practice- challenging misconceptions

## The Occupational Therapy Clinical Education Program

The Occupational Therapy Clinical Education Program (OTCEP) strives for continuous improvement in, access to and the quality of clinical education for pre entry students and new graduates within Health and Hospital Services across the state. OTCEP provides support to students, their clinical educators, new graduates and their supervisors and produces high quality, evidence based clinical education resources.

## How to use this factsheet

This fact sheet is one in a series with each factsheet aiming to:

- provide a summary of literature and evidence on a key topic for the occupational therapy profession;
- guide reflection on the topic for future learning;
- refresh or extend knowledge; and,
- stimulate discussion and exploration of the topic.

The reflective questions at the end of this factsheet prompt an exploration of practice and the potential for translation of knowledge in practice. This learning activity can be completed by individuals or in learning groups and teams.

## Topic: Occupation focused models in practice- challenging misconceptions

A previous OTCEP factsheet provides a brief overview of the use of occupation focused models in practice. Seymour, Boniface and Ingham (2011) are the authors of a book chapter addressing common myths related to applying models in practice. This factsheet will address some of these misconceptions regarding the use of occupation focussed models in clinical practice largely adapted from their work.

## Will my practice be restricted by the use of a model?

Models '*provide a conceptual structure by means of which clinical reasoning can take place*' (Hagedorn 1995, p 39 cited in Seymour et al 2011). Rather than restrict practice they challenge occupational therapists to think comprehensively about each individual client and their unique occupational difficulties. Conceptual models were developed in the 1980s to support an occupational focus as an alternative to impairment focus (Joosten 2015) thus enabling a holistic approach within occupational therapy. A model of practice should be used alongside other forms of evidence based theory (Seymour et al 2011), broadening rather than restricting the scope of occupational therapy practice.

## Will the use of a model be time consuming?

While learning about and applying occupational therapy theory or models may take time, this is outweighed by the benefits for the occupational therapy profession and the needs of clients. Conceptual models in practice enable occupational therapists to more effectively articulate their clinical reasoning and structure documentation (Seymour et al 2011). They enable the holistic identification of the client's occupational needs as an alternative to reductionist approaches and provide a crucial evidence base for occupational therapy which demonstrates the value of the profession (Seymour et al 2011).

## Are models compatible with care pathways?

Clinical care pathways aim to increase the consistency of evidence based services. They can be used to monitor and review outcome and collate variances between planned and actual

service delivery. However care pathways also need to include adequate flexibility to ensure the needs of individuals are met. Since the complete standardisation of occupational therapy provision is not the intention of a care pathway approach, practice models can enable client centred variations between interventions (Seymour et al 2011).

### Can I use headings of a model as a checklist?

Seymour et al (2011) warn against 'checking off headings from a model' without understanding the theory that underpins the model as this limits its use and detracts from the quality of the therapeutic relationship. However, within an education context, the use of worksheets and learning aids have been used effectively to prompt learners to consider the concepts within particular models. Application of Seymour, Boniface and Ingham's (2011) recommendation would mean that the learner then consults supporting theory and the model itself to ensure a comprehensive approach to the models application is taken.

### Can I use an 'eclectic' approach when using models?

It may be that one model will not be adequate in all cases and that models can be used in combination. However, occupational therapists need to be able to critically appraise available models in relation to their concepts, evidence base and practical application to determine the most suitable choices to guide practice (Wong and Fisher 2015).

*"Best practice requires the OT to thoughtfully choose the model/s that fits their views of the purpose and focus of OT as well as the model supporting their ability to understand and explain the specific challenges faced by their client/s"* (Keilhofner, 2009)

## Reflective Questions

You may like to consider the following individually or within a group:

- What factors support the use of models in your practice area?
- What are the challenges to the use of models in your area?

- What might be the solutions to these challenges?

## Would you like to explore the application of *occupation focused models in practice* further?

1. Request a copy of the OT Key Concept Learning Resource titled: *Models of Practice in Occupational Therapy* by contacting your local OT CESO or email [OTCEP@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:OTCEP@health.qld.gov.au)
2. Explore the references and activities within the above Key Concept Learning Resource or the references documented at the end of this factsheet.

The OTCEP has produced a series of OT Key Concept Learning Resources able for use by individuals or groups as a reference guide or as a workbook. The learning resources address the key concepts identified in the Occupational Therapy Clinical Capability Framework (OTCCF). The OTCCF is an integrated and coordinated framework for clinical education and training for occupational therapy in Queensland Health. It has been designed as a resource to support clinical development for occupational therapists with different levels of experience. Contact [OTCEP@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:OTCEP@health.qld.gov.au) for more information or see the OTCEP QHEPS site (*soon to be updated*): <http://paweb.sth.health.qld.gov.au/qhot/otccf.asp>

## References

- Seymour A, Boniface G & Ingham L Myths around using theory in occupational therapy practice. In: Boniface G & Seymour A Using Occupational Therapy Theory in Practice. Chichester, Wiley Blackwell.
- Joosten A V (2015) Contemporary occupational therapy: Our occupational therapy models are essential to occupation centered practice. Australian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 62, 219-222.
- Kielhofner G. (2009). *Conceptual foundations of occupational therapy practice* (4th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis Co.
- Wong, S.R & Fisher, G. (2015) Comparing and Using Occupation-Focused Models. *Occupational Therapy In Health Care*, 29:3, 297-315

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