

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Charlie Baumer, COTA

Introduction

- The purpose of this qualitative study was to gather information about the history and evolution of occupational therapy in Wyoming from Charlie's point of view.
- Charlie was one of 29 individuals interviewed for a life history study, which is part of a larger life history project entitled, *Life Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) in North Dakota and Wyoming*.
- This study is intended to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists with a view of how occupational therapy has evolved in the state of Wyoming.

Literature Review

- Life history is an approach that can help occupational therapists to better understand the experiences of an individual.
- Using a life history research approach assists the therapist with information regarding, "daily occupations, routines, family member relationships, sociocultural influences" from a client's perspective (Larson & Fanchiang, 1996).
- In clinical practice, life history includes constructing and interpreting an individual's important life events.
- It is also important for the researchers to utilize their listening skills when interviewing Charlie to better understand his perspective and interpretation of practice (Frank, 1996).
- Occupational therapy continued to grow in the middle of the 20th century, especially in the psychiatric settings and occupational therapy assistants began to develop in healthcare settings.
- In the 1970s, AOTA proposed that occupational therapy assistants take a certification exam as a part of advancing educational standards.
- AOTA enacted a career mobility plan for occupational therapy assistants in the 1970s. The mobility plan allows OTAs, with four years of practice experience to become a therapist upon completion of a self-study plan, six months of fieldwork experience, and by passing the certification exam.
- By the mid-1970s, completing the credentials included state licensure, statutory certification, registration, or trademark laws.
- At the end of the 1970s, OTAs were advanced to COTAs through full AOTA membership rights.
- In the 1980s, it was suggested that COTAs needed to advocate for their role to become more involved in the profession.
- At the end of the 1980s, there were 66 occupational therapy assistant associate programs and 5 certificate programs (Salvatori, 2001).
- Using a life history approach provides the researchers with experience using person-centered language to enhance future practice (Burke & Kern, 1996).

Description of Charlie



- Charlie grew up wanting to be a locomotive engineer and started down that path at the age of 18 but was laid off two years later.
- He was first introduced to occupational therapy when he became a paraplegic from a toboggan accident in 1975.
- Through the hospitalization and rehabilitation, Charlie was treated by OT's and Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTAs) and appreciated how they helped him.
- Charlie attended COTA school in Duluth, MN and graduated in December of 1978.
- Charlie is a member of the Wyoming Occupational Therapy Association (WYOTA), he has served as the Vice President for WYOTA.
- Charlie served on the conference committee for the state wide occupational therapy conference.
- Charlie is 62 years old and has been a practicing COTA for 38 years.

Methods

- The study used a qualitative life history approach which allowed the focus to be on Charlie's involvement in the evolution of occupational therapy practice in Wyoming.
- Charlie was assigned to the students from a list developed by the course instructors through purposive sampling.
- Throughout the process of participant selection, there were no gatekeeper issues and initial contact was made via course instructors.
- Prior to the interview, informed consent was obtained.
- The data collection method used, was a semi-structured interview which was guided by an interview schedule. The schedule was initially prepared by the course instructors but modifications were made by the students in order to pertain more to Charlie.
- The interview took place via video conference between the students in Casper, WY and the interviewee in Greybull, WY, in early October of 2017.
- The participant and researchers conferenced via blackboard collaborate. No video was available, and therefore only audio conferencing was completed.
- Data was collected from an interview and internet search.

Data Analysis

- The Kawa model influenced the coding system because the researchers wanted to incorporate Charlie's entire life history. Therefore, as not to denote any specific event during his career, the researchers coded each answer Charlie provided. The interview schedule was set up in accordance with the Kawa model. The questions were in an order the flowed well. This made the interview flow as if he were telling the researchers his entire professional life story, with few prompts or questions.
- The interview schedule was set up in an order that flowed sequentially with the events which have happened in Charlie's professional life. This guided the interview in that Charlie was able to discuss the topics in order, creating a natural flow, allowing him to recall periods of his life based on what events were happening in the world around him. The researchers were able to identify events happening within the OT world and were able to help Charlie identify personally meaningful events that were occurring within his personal life, in order to help him recall what he was feeling, thinking, and doing, throughout his career as a COTA.
- The interview was focused on understanding where Charlie came from, where he is now, and where he is going. The 20 main codes from the interview were placed into three categories, legalities, OT practice, and characteristics.

Legality

- Charlie questions the necessity of specialty certifications; in rural practice it is necessary to be able to meet multiple needs of clients. The in your paper you can use a quote that discusses.
- Legislation is an important aspect of practice; it influences reimbursement and helps establish treatment protocol.
- Charlie values continuing education; it is key to continuing competency.

OT Practice

- Charlie views OT as a growing profession with a need for more practitioners in rural settings.
- Charlie is able to provide client centered care and able to connect readily with male clients.
- OT is a dynamic profession that has evolved across time, he values advanced training and team work.

Characteristics

- Charlie has the perspective of being both a patient and a practitioner, he recognized that his OT demonstrated communication and therapeutic use of self, influencing his perspective in practice.
- Charlie believes the lack of reimbursement/funding and limitation of his scope of practice as an OTA, is challenging in meeting client needs.
- Working in a setting where Charlie felt he was part of a family, positively impacted his ability to balance his personal and professional roles.

The Life History of Charlie Baumer, COTA			
Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialty Certifications Licensure Continuing Education Protocol Education Legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OT Dynamics Male Perspective Present Practice Past Context of Practice Healthcare Team OT/COTA Dynamic Rural Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personality Traits/ Growth Challenges Role Models Transition/Balance Impacts Participative Roles Advice for Future OTs
Categories	Legality	OT Practice	Characteristics
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlie questions the necessity of specialty certifications; in rural practice it is necessary to be able to meet multiple needs of clients. The in your paper you can use a quote that discusses. Legislation is an important aspect of practice; it influences reimbursement and helps establish treatment protocol. Charlie values continuing education; it is key to continuing competency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlie views OT as a growing profession with a need for more practitioners in rural settings. Charlie is able to provide client centered care and able to connect readily with male clients. OT is a dynamic profession that has evolved across time, he values advanced training and team work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlie has the perspective of being both a patient and a practitioner, he recognized that his OT demonstrated communication and therapeutic use of self, influencing his perspective in practice. Charlie believes the lack of reimbursement/funding and limitation of his scope of practice as an OTA, is challenging in meeting client needs. Working in a setting where Charlie felt he was part of a family, positively impacted his ability to balance his personal and professional roles.
Assertions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Charlie is passionate about occupational therapy; he was instrumental in establishing practice in rural settings, bringing his personal experiences with therapy, and his focus on client-centered care. He values the collaboration he has had in inter- and intra-professional team work in order to give back to the profession, as evidenced by his dedication to continuing education. 		

Conclusions

Assertion

- Charlie is passionate about occupational therapy; he was instrumental in establishing practice in rural settings, bringing his personal experiences with therapy, and his focus on client-centered care. He values the collaboration he has had in inter- and intra-professional team work in order to give back to the profession, as evidenced by his dedication to continuing education.
- During the time Charlie entered into the field of occupational therapy, there was a high demand for COTAs. There were new regulations mandating the need for national certifications for OTAs before they began practicing.
- Charlie's initial entry into the field began at a nursing home. During that time COTAs were highly sought out in both nursing homes and psychiatric settings.
- He is highly passionate about giving back to the profession what it gave him in his time of need.
- He would like to see the profession continue to grow and improve while continuing to stay grounded in the foundation of occupational therapy.

Thank You

The students would like to sincerely thank Charlie Baumer for his time and willingness to share his life story with them for this project.

References

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