

Life History: Janet Salzwedel, OTR/L

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Purpose Statement

This life history was one of 29 life history interviews which are a part of a larger project, *Life Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) in North Dakota and Wyoming*. The purpose of the project is to gather information about the history and evolution of occupational therapy (OT) practice in North Dakota and Wyoming through life histories of individuals who have been influential in developing OT in these two states. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information. This study is intended to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how occupational therapy practice has evolved from its inception to current practice in North Dakota and Wyoming.

Description of Participant

- Janet graduated from UND in 1980 with a bachelors degree in OT.
- Work experience includes:
 - Polinsky Rehab Center – Duluth, MN
 - St. Luke’s Hospital – Aberdeen, SD
 - McKennan Hospital – Sioux Falls, SD
 - Dakota Hospital – Fargo, ND
- Currently works at Sanford in Fargo, ND in physical disabilities, acute care.
- She is an active member in NDOTA and AOTA.
- Janet has been involved in a variety of Continuing Education opportunities to keep current.
- Achievements of Janet’s include serving as the Vice Chair on the North Dakota Board of Occupational Therapy Practice.

Literature Review

- Between the years of 1986 and 2000, many historical themes emerged from the literature, some of which included role identification, credentialing, and goals of practice (Reed, 2006).
- During this time period, the profession increased its ability to communicate the core views to consumers, as well as other professionals (Reed, 2006).
- As the profession continued to grow, it gained knowledge and experience. It also learned how to speak for itself in legislative activities (Reed, 2006).
- State licensure was first discussed in the 60’s, and became a reality in 1983 (History of the Board, n.d.).
- The North Dakota State Board of Occupational Therapy was established in June of 1983 for the purpose of licensing occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistants (Archives – State Agencies – Board of Occupational Therapy Practice, n.d.).
- In August of 1986, November of 1992, and November of 2000, there were adoptions for Administrative Rules for the Board of OT Practice (History of the Board, n.d.).

Literature Review Continued

- Changes were enacted in April of 2014 which included updated entry level, updated electronic processing of licenses, and updated supervision of OTA and limited permit holders (History of the Board, n.d.).
- Other issues during this time period included a lack of fieldwork training sites and new service delivery models, which included shorter hospital stays and more outpatient and home care, as well as the need to validate practice through research (Reed, 2006).

Methodology

- The study conducted was a qualitative study using a life history approach.
- The Kawa Model was used to guide the researchers in examining turning points during the course of Janet’s life.
- Janet was assigned to the researchers from a list developed by the course instructors through purposive sampling.
- Initial contact was made by course instructors, followed by email contact from the researchers.
- Informed consent was given to the researchers before conducting the interview.
- The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the course instructors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals interviewed as part of the larger project. The researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each specific interview.
- Qualitative data was collected through the interview, as well as historical documents posted on University of North Dakota’s Blackboard website. Other information about Janet’s work and educational history was reviewed on her resume.
- The interview took place in Janet’s home at two o’clock in the afternoon. It lasted an hour and fifteen minutes.

Discussion/Conclusion

In completing this qualitative study, the researchers learned about Janet’s life as an occupational therapist, as well as how the history of occupational therapy has changed over time. Occupational therapy has become a part her life, both inside and outside of her career. She shared with the researchers the ups and downs that have shaped her to be the practitioner that she is today. Changes within the profession have altered the way therapists work with clients to increase functional outcomes. **Final Working Assertion:** In practice, Janet believes it is most important to use occupations and therapeutic use of self when working with clients. She also explained how crucial it is for health disciplines to collaborate to help clients achieve independence and overall well-being. Occupational therapy is a career that is constantly changing, offering Janet flexibility and life-long learning. It must keep growing amidst the financial difficulties and degree shifts in order to grow as an evidence-based profession and to better serve clients.

Data Analysis

The categories the researchers developed consisted of Clinical Practice, Challenges, Good Career, and Changes.

Themes found under Clinical Practice include:

- In working with clients, Janet emphasizes therapeutic use of self and occupation to enhance independence.
- Janet values the core aspects of mental health in all practice settings.
- Every discipline serves their purpose on the healthcare team and it is important for them to collaborate.

Themes found under Challenges include:

- Janet has seen the effects of budget issues in rural areas that limit quality of care among clients.
- Janet has been involved in many positions of leadership in state organizations; she identified a need for more professional involvement and mentoring of new leaders to keep the profession growing.
- Due to the transitions of the OTA associates degree to a bachelors degree, Janet has realized there can be gray areas for supervision requirements and conduction of the evaluation process.
- Janet has seen the shift of occupational therapists now being required to work holidays and weekends in some areas of practice.

Themes found under Good Career include:

- The career is flexible and Janet has the freedom to find her niche and be happy within her area of practice.
- The profession has given Janet the opportunity to continue education and her learning to better serve and impact clients.
- Janet finds her coworkers to be a strong support system and an important part of her personal and professional life.

Themes found under changes include:

- Janet views technology and social media as factors that have brought change in our world as well as the OT profession.
- Degree transitions and course work are becoming more research and model-based compared to what Janet experienced in her past.
- Insurance companies and HIPPA laws have become frustrating for Janet as well as for other professionals and students due to reimbursement issues and limited observation hours.

References

- Archives – State Agencies – Board of Occupational Therapy Practice. (n.d.). Retrieved November 28, 2017, from <http://history.nd.gov/archives/stateagencies/occupationaltherapy.html>
- History of the Board. (n.d.). Retrieved November 28, 2017 from https://blackboard.und.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-1355324-dt-content-rid-21057446_1/courses/UND01-1810-OT458-05449-05470/ND%20history%20supervision.pdf
- Reed, K.L. (April 17, 2006). Occupational therapy values and beliefs, the formative years, 1904-1929. *OT Practice*, 21-25.