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AOTA Continuing Education: Occupational Therapy's Role in Addressing Sexuality and Intimacy

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AOTA Continuing Education: Occupational Therapy's Role in Addressing Sexuality and Intimacy

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Expert Mentor: Debbie Amini, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Director of Professional Development, AOTA

Mission and Vision

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) mission: "to advance occupational therapy practice, education, and research through standard setting and advocacy on behalf of its members, the profession, and the public."²

VISION 2025

The AOTA's Vision 2025 states:

"as an inclusive profession, occupational therapy maximizes health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living."³

Agency Needs

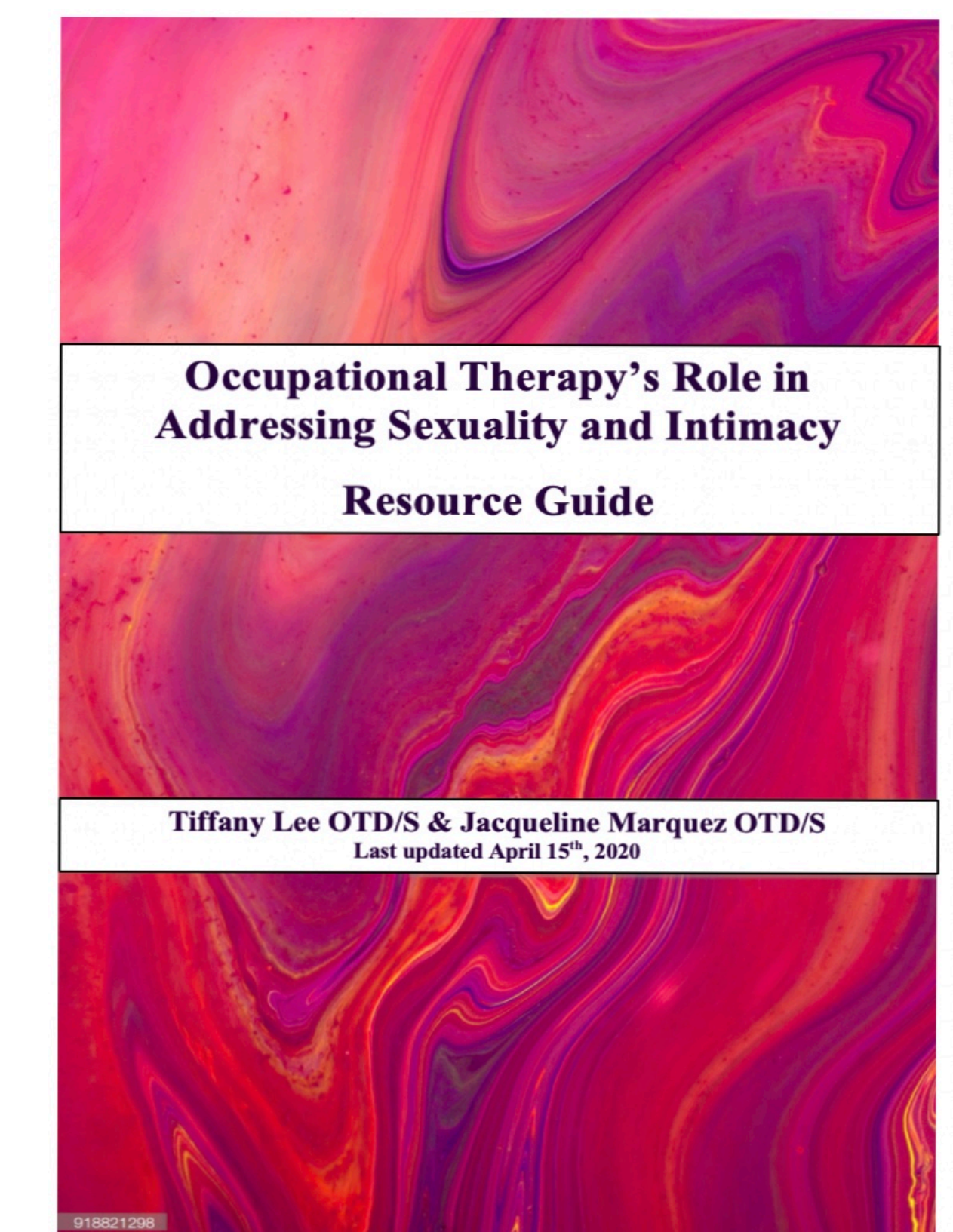
- According to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, sexual activity is an ADL. Therefore, it is well within our scope of practice to address sexuality and intimacy with clients. However, this topic is often under addressed by occupational therapy (OT) practitioners in clinical practice.¹
- Barriers for OT practitioners in addressing sexuality and intimacy with clients include:
 - Attitudes and bias toward sexuality and disability
 - Cultural/ religious barriers
 - Fear of offending the client
 - Therapist perceived lack of knowledge
 - Therapist discomfort^{4, 5, 6, 7, 8}
- In order to address these barriers, educational opportunities should be available to OT practitioners. While AOTA offers a continuing education (CE) article on sexuality, AOTA does not have an online CE course available.
- This course aims to:
 - Provide continuing education opportunities for OT practitioners about sexuality and intimacy
 - Increase OT practitioner's knowledge and confidence to advocate for clients
 - Promote occupational justice by addressing occupations that are important to the populations that they serve and prevent further occupational injustice in the area of sexuality and intimacy

Goals

- Develop understanding of OT's role in addressing sexuality and intimacy
- Determine best practices for teaching adults from an online/distance learning platform
- Increase confidence in researching and synthesizing data in order to implement evidence-based interventions into clinical practice
- Identify education trends about sexuality and intimacy and OT practitioners' current knowledge
- Identify OT practitioners' learning preferences related to content and design
- Increase OT practitioners' access to educational materials regarding sexuality and intimacy
- Develop 60-90 minute online continuing education course with knowledge checks and a final exam on the topic of OT's role in addressing sex and intimacy in practice

Outcomes

- Conducted in-depth literature review of topics related to sexuality and intimacy, adult learning principles, and instructional design
- Conducted informal needs assessment to gather information to guide course content and development of educational materials
- Created 1.0 credit hour continuing education course including:
 - 3 knowledge checks
 - 12 question exam
- Created supplemental resource guide including:
 - Helpful Websites, Positioning and Devices
 - Articles, Books, and Education
 - Documentaries, Movies, and Podcasts
 - Assessments and Intervention Ideas
 - Documentation and Goal Writing
- Beta Testing completed prior to official release of course to gather feedback



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