

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Annie Schlecht, MOTR/L, CIMI

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Introduction

This life history one of 31 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

- Annie graduated with her Masters of Occupational Therapy from the University of North Dakota in May of 2011
- Annie began working at the Anne Carlsen Early Intervention center in Jamestown, North Dakota. This is where she first identified the gap between services and the occupation of sleep, leaving this setting to pursue her private practice in 2017
- Annie additionally worked with pediatric clients at Region IV Right Track program from 2012-2017
- In October of 2016, Annie began her private practice Zen Sleep Consulting, LLC in Wimbledon, North Dakota
- Annie embraces rural practice by utilizing telehealth to provide services to clients across the world
- Additional trainings and certifications that Annie has required include: Sleep Consultant, Alert Program, Sequential Oral Sensory (SOS) Approach to feeding, Neurodevelopment Therapy, Public speaking, Website design, Social media management and marketing, Reiki healing sessions, Guided meditation, and Chakra clearing

Literature Review

The researchers considered events that were influential to Annie since becoming an occupational therapist in a rural North Dakota setting, to view the impact they had on her practice.

Affordable Care Act

- Affordable Care Act was implemented to expand coverage, improve patient outcomes, and achieve savings. This act provided the opportunity for expansion of occupational therapy in the health care field through gaining a spot at the table in the primary health care team, allowing for better advocacy for clients in all areas of practice. (Carson, 2012).

Vision 2025

- After completing the Centennial Vision, the occupational therapy field has created Vision 2025 striving for the following principles: cultural accessibility, client collaboration, evidence-based practice, and forming leaders to change policies, environments, and complex systems. (AOTA, 2017).

Telehealth

- Due to evidence, Telehealth has been recognized as an effective means of intervention. Studies have shown that this method leads to similar outcomes that would be viewed within a clinic, and will allow for better access to health care, specifically in rural settings. (Braveman & Metzler, 2012).



Methods

Study Design

- This study utilized a qualitative life history approach, allowing the focus to be on the participant's involvement in the evolution of occupational therapy practice.

Participant Selection

- Purposive sampling was used by project directors to recruit participants and selected from a compiled list of participants.

Data Collection

- A semi-structured interview was conducted over Zoom – a video conference call – with the student researchers. Additional information was collected through email. The interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Trustworthiness

- **Credibility:** Triangulation was achieved by gathering data through a video interview, resume, business website, and follow-up emails that provided additional information.
- **Transferability:** Similar populations can reference data easily through codes, categories, and themes.
- **Dependability and Conformability:** Student researchers used self-reflective journaling and verbatim transcription to ensure an un-biased, accurate representation life history of Annie Schlecht was captured.

Data Analysis

The transcription was read and reread by the researchers; 17 codes were then identified, grouped into 3 categories with associated themes

Findings

- **Entrepreneurship Pursuit**
 - Annie's experience in early intervention led her to focus on the occupation of sleep
 - Annie's love for learning has influenced her to broaden her skill set with continuing education
 - Annie's passion for occupational therapy combined with the identified need within the occupation of sleep led her to become a sleep consultant.
- **Impressions of Practice**
 - Annie's view of practice shifts includes the need for additional accreditation within practice.
 - Annie embodied sleep as an important human occupation, advocating for further integration in OT practice
 - Annie wishes to advocate for sleep OT and the expansion of this combination throughout the nation
- **Embracing Rural Practice**
 - The support system surrounding Annie includes; family, mentors, colleagues, and peers throughout the health science fields
 - Road blocks Annie has faced within rural practice include proximity and accessibility to clients
 - Technology has allowed Annie to overcome rural practice road blocks and reach out to individuals around the world

Discussion

Assertion

- Annie Schlecht is the pioneer of combining occupational therapy practice with a sleep consultant role within North Dakota; utilizing mentors, embracing rural practice, and using the core values of OT as a compass to guide her bright future of expanding her own practice.

Kawa Model

- Throughout the study's process the researchers took careful consideration to encompass overall life experiences of the client within the principles of the Kawa Model.
- The principles that were embodied include: barriers, values, feeling of satisfaction, and the physical and social environments surrounding the participant. (Teoh & Iwama, 2015).

References

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