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OTD Capstone Symposia

Fall 2023

Bridging the Gap from New Graduate to Practicing Occupational Therapist: An Educational Resource in Orthopedics

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Recommended Citation

Carlson, R., Carey, H., Munch, K., & Choe, L. (2023, October 1). Bridging the Gap from New Graduate to Practicing Occupational Therapist: An Educational Resource in Orthopedics. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesfall2023/16>

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Bridging the Gap from New Graduate to Practicing Occupational Therapist: An Educational Resource in Orthopedics

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Background

OT is pivotal in the rehabilitation and recovery of individuals with orthopedic conditions (Nelson, 2010). However, as a new graduate occupational therapist there is limited support as they make the transition to clinical practice (Turpin et al., 2021). New graduates receive support through professional mentorship and peer support but is often focused on *safe* practice of basic skills rather than on *best* practice (Opoku et al., 2021). New graduates would feel more confident in clinical judgment and decision making with additional support from mentors and accessible up-to-date resources (Adam et al., 2013).

Problem

New graduate occupational therapists entering the orthopedic setting require support in the transition from student to clinician. New graduates face many challenges with little real-world experience, revealing a gap in resources to assist in the transition from OT school to practice.

Purpose

Develop an accessible resource for new occupational therapists entering the orthopedic setting .

Methods

- Completed an informal discussion with new graduates to understand the specific needs of the target population to include in the resource.
- The project was completed at Florida Orthopedic Institute in Tampa, FL under the OT team identifying common conditions, interventions, and the OT role in the orthopedic setting.
- Developed the guidebook based on observations, hands-on experience and topics discussed with new graduates.
- The guidebook was developed in three phases:
 - Pre-development: literature review, needs assessment, observations.
 - Development: creating the resource, categorizing material gathered, taking images.
 - Revision: evaluating and reviewing the material.

References



Scan for References.

Project

Topics covered in the educational resource:

- Healing Phases
- OT Process in Orthopedics
- Exercise and Intervention Examples
- Tips and Tricks for Documentation and Splinting
- Anatomy of the UE

Outcomes:

- Deliver a product to help in the transitional period from new graduate to practicing clinician.
- Include detailed descriptions, protocols, progression, interventions, and images of each condition to best understand OTs role in the progression of rehabilitation in orthopedics.
- Reference assessment tools characterized by outcome with documentation tips for evaluation.
- Provide pattern drawing and splinting tips as a foundational component to sharpen and build upon splitting skills.
- Create interactive material to assist with visualizing conditions and anatomical application for further understanding.
- Serve as a guide for occupational therapists entering orthopedics to reference for evidence-based practice.

Recommendations:

- Provide students and new graduates with guidebooks for their respective settings to equip them with the necessary information needed for success.
- Incorporate quick, accessible guidebooks at OT conferences, schools, fieldwork sites, and workplaces to increase clinical competence.

