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The OT's Role in an Interprofessional Research Team

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Why Interprofessional Research?

- The vision for OT is to become science-driven and evidence-based, however barriers exist in day to day practice (AOTA, 2007)
- Research requires contributions from multiple disciplines and lends itself well to an inclusive approach
- Collaboration in our day to day work feels natural, often is part of customary practice
- Interprofessional education (IPE) has been established in the healthcare field for over 40 years to enhance client care and implement workforce strategies (College of Occupational Therapists, 2012)

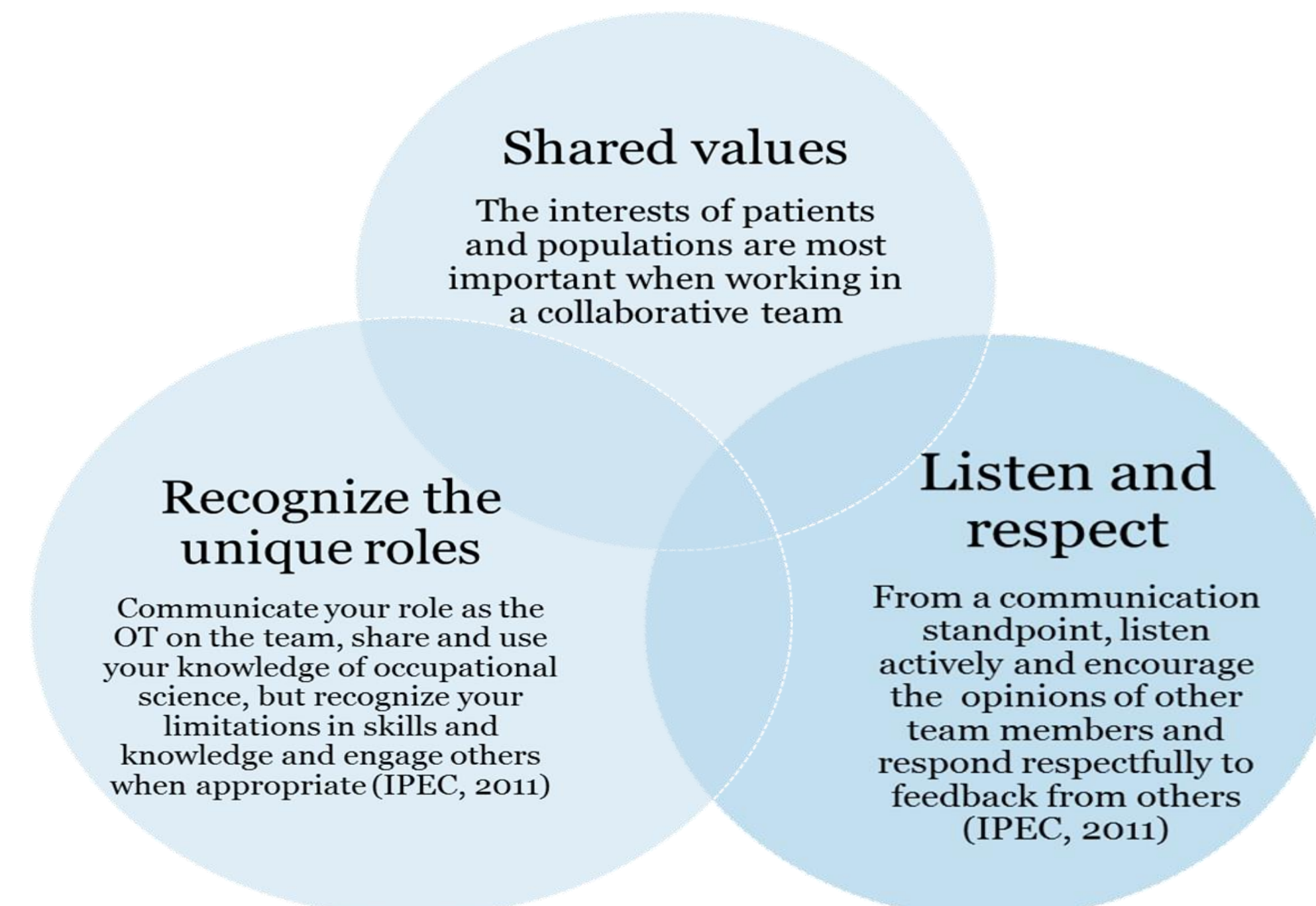
Issues:

- Program models in practice and research for fostering interprofessional collaboration are scarce
- Intraprofessional mentoring is inadequate (Frontera et al., 2006)

Possible Solutions:

- Be proactive; seek opportunities for educational mentorship outside of the profession
- Create partnerships
- Offer to mentor professionals in other disciplines

Framework for Interprofessional Teamwork



Key Point: Building research capacity includes *establishing a research culture, environment, and infrastructure* as well as *partnership* with other disciplines

Personal Experience and Lessons Learned:

- Perceived lack of experience to contribute to research team
 - Identified mentor
 - Established role to analyze baseline data to gain skills in statistical analysis
- Lack of confidence and challenges in asserting the importance of participation in meaningful roles and other key concepts of occupational therapy
 - As a strategy, consolidated evidence to solidify a rationale articulating the OT's perspective

Tips for Involvement in an Interprofessional Research Project

- Seek opportunities
 - Get involved with research in your area (academia; other health care institutions)
 - Assist an investigator in research functions such as implementing experimental or control protocols
- Pursue intra-institutional partnerships that facilitate access to colleagues in other scientific and professional disciplines
 - If your institution is not involved in research, suggest the benefits to your employer.
- When engaged in a secondary data analysis, ask a research question first and then see if data supports your question
 - Is your research question clearly designed?
 - How would this project expand knowledge to better serve the needs of your client population?
- Keep true to the values and tenets of occupational therapy
 - It's up to you to keep the discussion focused on meaningful occupation and participation
 - As part of an interprofessional team, your role is to clearly articulate your position and contribute an OT perspective