The OT's Role in an Interprofessional Research Team

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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

- Shared values: The interests of patients and populations are most important when working in a collaborative team
- Recognize the unique roles: Communicate your role as the OT on the team, share and use your knowledge of occupational science, but recognize your limitations in skills and knowledge and engage others when appropriate (IPEC, 2011)
- Listen and respect: From a communication standpoint, listen actively and encourage the opinions of other team members and respond respectfully to feedback from others (IPEC, 2011)

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