

OT Professional Event Attendance and Reflection Paper

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OT 562: Personal Transformation II

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On March 10th, I had the opportunity to attend the Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association (ConnOTA) monthly board meeting. Even though I was there to observe the meeting, the experience I gained was far more than an overview of occupational therapy's professional side.

Attitudes Toward Professional Involvement

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposes that intention to participate in a behavior is affected by three primary factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Prior to the ConnOTA meeting, I had a different opinion about professional involvement. Although I knew it was significant, I did not feel inclined to become engaged immediately. However, my viewpoint shifted after attending the meeting. I observed directly how board members freely worked together and exchanged information regarding advocacy initiatives. Their commitment taught me to understand that being part of a professional organization is more important than simply attending meetings so that we can promote and advance our profession.

Subjective Norms and Influence from Fieldwork

My interpretation was also greatly influenced by subjective norms. During my fieldwork at Mozaic Senior Life, I had the opportunity to work with geriatric individuals for five weeks on a range of social and cognitive tasks, such as Wordle, Connections, solving riddles, and making a collage. My point of view was broadened by attending the ConnOTA meeting, which demonstrated to me how experts in our profession actively create those standards by taking leadership positions and influencing the course of the profession.

Perceived Behavioral Control

According to Ajzen (1991), behavioral intentions are strongest when a person feels capable of carrying out the behavior, has a positive attitude toward it, and feels pressured by society to do so. By making professional involvement appear far more accessible than I had anticipated, the meeting improved my perception of behavioral control. I now recognize the value of simply just showing up, listening, learning, and engaging when I can, even if I don't hold an official leadership position. I learned from this experience that I'm more capable of interacting with the field than I first thought. It aided me in starting to see my own position as a potential advocate. Looking back through the lens of Therapeutic Use of Self (TUOS), I saw how my identity as a developing OT changed as I observed other people's dedication to their careers. Their commitment enabled me to see myself in the future, not only as a practitioner but also as someone who contributes to the field.

Connection to the OTPF-4 and AOTA Vision 2025

This perspective also aligns with the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF-4), which highlights advocacy and professional responsibility as essential elements of occupational therapy practice. The OTPF highlights that OTs must not only provide client-centered therapy but also take part in leadership, advocacy, and consultation activities that advance the profession.

The AOTA Vision 2025, which describes a commitment to being a diverse and inclusive profession that serves societal demands through accessible, collaborative care, offers another insightful viewpoint. It became clear to me how much work goes on behind the scenes to keep our profession respected and visible when I attended the meeting. It helped me realize that we run the risk of becoming marginalized if we don't maintain our professional commitment.

Future Intentions and Broader Reflections

After reflecting, I've concluded that I see myself going to more professional events in the future. I learned the value of maintaining a connection with my clients and their everyday lives during my fieldwork at Mozaic Senior Life.

If only a small portion of us support the profession, we risk being underrepresented. I feel more morally obligated to help in some way now that I know this. As a future occupational therapist, I want to contribute to the development of the field rather than only responding to it. If occupational therapists are not involved, choices may be made without consulting us, which could be detrimental to both practitioners and the community we serve.

Knowing that my voice and efforts can help shape occupational therapy's future, I intend to continue being involved, even in the smallest ways. I gained the confidence to remain involved and a better understanding of how my OT role extends beyond providing direct care.

References

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