

OT Professional Event Attendance and Reflection Paper

Nicole De Leonardis

Master of Occupational Therapy Program, Sacred Heart University

OT 562 Personal Transformation II

Professor Lola Halperin

April 13, 2025

Introduction

I had the pleasure of attending the AOTA Inspire 2025 conference on April 3rd to the 5th. The conference was an opportunity to connect with other occupational therapy professionals, discover aspects of OT I had not yet explored, and spend time learning about what I want for myself as a future clinician in the OT field. Attending this conference broadened my perspective of what it means to be involved in an organization such as this one. I experienced empowerment, a sense of pride in a career, and a newfound understanding of what it means to be an occupational therapist. Because of this, I have a growing desire to become more involved in where the future of my career is going as I continue to grow alongside its development in our country.

The connection between behavior and newly learned experiences

Attending the conference positively influenced my attitude toward professional involvement. I found the presentations, posters, and booths not only informative but also motivating towards the goals I have. The opportunity to hear from experts and see real-world applications of emerging trends in OT sparked an increasing interest in being more involved in professional organizations. For example, the keynote speaker was the first presentation I had the pleasure of attending. To hear from such a strong, empowering woman representing our career in a light that showcases such impactful results is reason enough for me to be so grateful to be in a profession like this. She showed me how attitudes and perceived behavior greatly influence the impact you have on your patients. For someone like Coach Darr, who explained how she could die at any moment, to dedicate her life to helping others through occupational therapy, was enough for me to wholeheartedly want to do the same. Her speech along with many other empowering presentations and posters showed me how vital it is to stay connected to a

professional organization like AOTA to continue to grow as a clinician and provide effective client care.

Understanding the subjective norms

There is a strong culture of involvement and mentorship in AOTA. Many of the attendees and speakers seemed driven by a sense of duty to advocate and advance the field. I imagine that many people attend these events because they feel it is the professional norm to stay engaged and informed about how OT is evolving. I noticed a sense of commitment toward contributing time out of a passion for the profession and a desire to shape its future. This made me realize that such dedication is more common than I had assumed. I recognize this as well in my fieldwork this semester. Applying what I know now to Dana's House showed me how caring for others is just as impactful for me as it is for the clients themselves. The last comment a client left me with was, "Thank you so much for treating us like normal people." This warmed my heart, and I connected this to the passion and dedication spoken about at the conference.

Conclusion

I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to attend the AOTA INSPIRE 2025 Conference in Philadelphia. I can see how this experience influenced my attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. I can see how essential it is to stay educated, connected, and inspired within the field of OT. The commitment to advancing the profession made by those who attended and spoke made a strong impression on me. I feel more capable and empowered to get involved in the AOTA community, as well as educate and advocate for those who may not be informed. Overall, this experience left me with new motivation, insights, and a deeper understanding of my role in the OT community.

References

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