

Global Perspectives in Professional Reasoning for Occupational Therapists working on the Margins: New ways of thinking to guide practitioners in reaching underserved populations

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Most professionals recognize that current health care systems leave many people unable to access the occupational therapy services they need. Yet OTs in traditional settings often do not have the skills to venture into the margins of their communities to fill these unmet needs. There are many reasons for this, including: cultural barriers, lack of funding, safety concerns, political disincentives, and social stigmas. This workshop explores modes of clinical and professional reasoning appropriate for occupational therapists working in marginal settings. For example, victims of war or natural disasters, homeless, unemployed, refugees, children or the elderly living in unsafe urban neighborhoods may all benefit from OT services they have no way to access. Today's OT professionals need new ways of thinking, such as strategic, political, social and developmental reasoning, to facilitate the establishment of services in these emerging areas of practice.

Teaching methods include presentation of information, small group work on case scenarios, questions and discussion, and reflection on own learning needs. Examples from different parts of the world will serve as inspiration for action. Participants will have opportunities to define and discuss marginal areas within their own communities, and to apply the principles of reasoning that provide the best fit for their own practice.

Objectives:

1. Understand and articulate the concepts of margins and marginalization
2. Recognize emerging modes of clinical and professional reasoning used by occupational therapists
3. Select modes of reasoning appropriate to particular situations
4. Identify their own learning needs in relation to reasoning skills.