

Working collectively to advance occupational therapy: a necessary condition for an effective evolution

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LA SANTÉ **DURABLE**  NOTRE ENGAGEMENT POUR LA VIE

Key messages

- Despite the ongoing need for areas of specific expertise (education, regulation, research, promotion), a **global coordinated vision** is essential in the evolution of the occupational therapy profession.
- Example: *Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC)*

Why necessary?

- **All professions constantly evolve in the face of new knowledge and other factors including, in recent years, increased requirements to justify services in both effectiveness and economic terms.**

Why necessary?

- **Canada : *Muriel Driver Memorial Lecture***
- **USA : *Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture***
- **UK : *Casson Memorial Lecture***
- **Australia : *Sylvia Docker Lecture***
- **Etc.**

Contemporary trends influencing the professions

- **Increased external control on health professional practice.**
- **Resource pressure; concerns about risks for clients; insufficiently justified variability in professional practice.**
- **However...potential impact on service quality.**
- **The specific case of occupational therapy: relatively small and powerless; making a case for a particular perspective : occupation.**

How to respond: **coconstruction**

- **Coconstruction : building answers together that are acceptable to the respective stakeholders involved.**
- **It isn't easy and it requires careful thought and planning.**
- **It requires clarity about power: it's not about winning the argument, it's about coconstructing a common vision.**



Conditions for successful coconstruction

- ***Recognizing the legitimacy of each stakeholder's mandate***
 - **Professional regulatory colleges:** protecting the public interest
 - **Educators:** preparing future professionals (achieving/upholding educational standards; promoting the generation of ideas, philosophies and research) E.g., www.acotup-acpue.ca
 - **Professional associations:** advance excellence in the profession (provide services that assist members; providing leadership in the profession's development and promotion) E.g., www.caot.ca
 - **Research foundation:** support research and scholarship in the profession's domain of expertise. E.g., <https://cotfcanada.org>

Conditions for successful coconstruction

- *Each stakeholder has non-negotiable obligations to meet even in the face of possible constraints*
 - **Professional regulatory colleges:** protecting the public interest and not the interests of professionals.
 - **Educational programs:** meet profession accreditation standards; within-university and within-jurisdiction obligations.
 - **Professional associations:** answerable to members.
 - **Research foundation:** answerable to members and sometimes also to sister funding organizations.

Conditions for successful coconstruction

- *Each stakeholder may be restricted in its own way. E.g.,*
 - **Professional regulatory colleges:** meet obligations despite overall reduced influence of the professions within society. Function under greater scrutiny.
 - **Educational programs:** important budget pressures. Promoting an unattainable ideal of practice given context realities?

Conditions for successful coconstruction

- **A necessary condition for developing durable solutions, that is, solutions with which each stakeholder organization can live and commit to, is that the mandate and reality of each organization be understood and recognized.**

Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC)

- “The health care system is Darwinian – dependent upon the survival of the fittest. While rehabilitation should be a key component within health systems ...occupational therapy is undervalued. **Occupational therapy organizations currently see the profession from a parochial position where a holistic perspective is needed. While each organization knows what they would like to accomplish, a national vision is needed to bring the efforts of the individual groups to work together for the benefit of the profession.”** (OTCC, 2012, p. 1)

Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC)

➤ **Terms of reference:**

- **“[OTC] represents all sectors of the occupational therapy profession in Canada, including researchers, educators, regulators and professional associations. [OTC] promotes information sharing and coordinated action and planning on strategic priorities identified from time to time to further the development of the occupational therapy profession.” (CAOT, n.d., para. 1)**

Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC)

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Next steps

- **Although there are many shared elements across the respective missions, visions, objectives and strategic priorities of each organization, they are each guided by their own board of directors who are in turn answerable to their stakeholders.**
- **Stakeholder organizations have to determine how a common vision can continue to be debated, revised as needed, and then reinforced across respective mandates and priorities.**

QUESTIONS?

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