

Graduates as innovators: Informing the profession on occupational rights and justice

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Introduction: In 2006, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists adopted seven principles which identify people's occupational rights and the issues that negate them. These principles provide a basis from which to evaluate how we can enable occupational justice with individuals, communities and organizations. The graduates of the future are a critical resource for advancing this agenda. A growing number of Occupational Therapy Educational Programs now include occupational rights in their curriculum. One example is to set the challenge for students to analyze unmet occupational needs in their community and develop services that might provide solutions. By working alongside community organizations many of these ideas are able to be implemented and promote long term change.

Aim and approach: This workshop aims to explore the WFOT human rights agenda in relation to Australian curricula with students, academics, practice educators and researchers. A brief introduction will present examples of students collaborating with occupational therapy departments and community organizations to address occupational rights issues. Informed by these examples and the WFOT principles, participants are invited to engage in facilitated small group discussions to generate a vision for educational curricula grounded in occupational justice. Structured exercises will lead participants from occupational therapy human rights competencies, to outlines of learning experiences, student research projects, fieldwork placements and desired learning outcomes.

Conclusion: This workshop promotes occupational justice as a matter of human rights and the legitimate domain of occupational therapy education and practice, and lays the groundwork for continued development of educational curricula.

References

WFOT Position Statement on Human Rights. (2006). Retrieved August 25, 2010, from http://www.wfot.org/office_files/Human%20Rights%20Position%20Statement%20Final%20NLH%281%29.pdf