Occupational Therapy Essay, Research Paper

Occupational Therapy

In today?s society, education and opportunity go hand-in-hand. Careers are now

requiring more research, more dedication and educational background to match. For

some people, hard work and sacrifice are enough to push them higher onto the safe

platform. But for others, the platform is unreachable due to a mental illness, handicap or

rehabilitation. That is where an occupational therapist steps in. The main goal of an

occupational therapist is to help disable people develop, recover or maintain daily lives

and work skills. This career is both demanding and rewarding, and more therapists are

choosing occupational as a career move.

Job Description

Occupational Therapists can work in many different environments. Some Occupational

Therapist?s dedicate their time in pediatrics helping children overcome their disabilities.

Others work with the elderly, reteaching skills they have lost due to disease. Many

Occupational Therapist have investigated their career further as industrial therapists,

placing their patients in jobs and monitoring their patients in jobs and monitoring their

progress. A select few Occupational Therapist research new products and devices that

they feel will help their patients learn easier. Regardless what area they are working in, the

main focus of the Occupational Therapist is to help their patients recover and enable them

to perform everyday tasks easily.

Education

When one decides to become an Occupational Therapist, there are many steps they need

to take in respect to education. During high school, students are encouraged to pay close

attention to biological sciences, psychology and social skills. During college, more in

depth hands on training is conducted. Occupational Therapist are required to have a

bachelor?s degree to enter the field. The Occupational therapist must then take a test to

receive their state certification, which is required in 36 states. Along with the education

and licensing, all Occupational Therapist should posses warmth and patience to inspire

both trust and respect. Individuals working in home health care must be able to

successfully adapt to a variety of settings (JIST 300, 169).

Areas of Employment

Occupational Therapists held over 40,000 jobs in 1992 (JIST 300, 169). These

Occupational Therapists work in hospitals mental health centers, rehabilitation centers,

nursing homes and job training services. Many Occupational Therapist have found

success in group or private practice, working with networks to refer patients.

Working Environments

A 40 hour work week is standard for Occupational Therapists. Some work longer hours

attending weekend seminars or events, volunteering for charities or checking in on working

patients. Occupational Therapists can experience both satisfaction and stress in

their career. The level of frustration in patients is high, especially those who are being

re-taught. There is a certain amount of attachment to patients, since their dependency on

the Occupational Therapist is great. The job can be rewarding also, teaching someone

how to walk again or how to talk. The Occupational Therapist is often seen as a key

factor in the results of the patient. Independent, positive life styles for their patients is what

their main goal is.

Outlook

Occupational Therapists are in high demand. Some 16,000 jobs will open up for

Occupational Therapists by the year 2000 because of the aging of the population

(Kleiman, 208). In 1992, Occupational Therapist were making an average salary of

$29,767, but by the year 2000 the average salary jumps to $51,000 (Kleiman, 208). As

direct insurance reimbursement is allowed by states, Occupational Therapist will open

independent practices to provide follow up services (Kleiman, 208). Medical advances

are now making it easier for patients to survive there is a good number of Occupational

Therapists who in schools with children as teachers. Exceptional educational education

and adult educating are often done by Occupational Therapist due to their patient and

understanding nature.

Interview

I interviewed Andrea Goldfarb, who is a licensed Occupational therapist working at

Health South in Sunrise. She first gave me a tour of the facility.

1). What made you decide on Occupational Therapy as a career choice?

A: I liked helping people, and when I interned at the hospitals in high school, I realized

these people who lost their limbs or couldn?t walk again needed further care. I asked to

be put with an Occupational Therapist, and enjoyed it very much.

2). Was the schooling difficult?

A: The certification boards had me studying a lot. There are so many details, and they

force you to make decisions on paper with out the patient in front of you. It?s definitely

challenging to balance a social life and school.

3). Do you think there will be a lot of openings for Occupational Therapist in the future?

A: Its a growing field. People are starting to realize that therapy and medicine can actually

help them. Doctors are so busy they need people to finish the job. I definitely see better

opportunities.

4). What is the most difficult part of your job?

A: Not always being able to help. Some people get so frustrated and quit, and you can?t

force them to get help. You get so close to them.

5). Do you see yourself in a private practice?

A: Eventually a group or private. Right now its nice to work with such a great staff. All the

pressure isn?t there to succeed. I can just deal one on one with my patients now.

6). What advice can you give me?

A: It can be competitive. Getting into a well established center isn?t easy. You need good

people to believe in your work, so you get referred and study for the boards. It?s worth

few weeks for a great job.

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