

Changing Therapists Behaviors toward Evidence-Based Practice

Deborah Bolding¹, Pamela Roberts², Shawn Phipps³

¹*Stanford Hospital and Clinics, Stanford, CA, United States*, ²*Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA, United States*, ³*California Children's Services, Los Angeles, CA, United States*

Introduction: Evidence-based practice (EBP) is important for improving client outcomes, accountability, and therapist skills. Many therapists graduated from occupational therapy programs before EBP became part of the educational standards, and/or work in settings where they do not have easy or free access to a computer or full-text articles. Additionally, integration of research evidence into clinical practice is challenging for the staff occupational therapist because of time constraints and lack of skills. This session will address the principles of EBP, challenges and benefits of using EBP in practice, a systematic method for access to evidence for occupational therapy practitioners, and development of a systematic method for training practitioners to search for and use evidence.

Objectives: Therapists will be able to identify ways to ask clinically relevant questions and find information in databases. They will learn the importance of changing evidence-based practice behaviors, and how to integrate evidence into clinical practice.

Description/Report: The authors worked as part of a program to develop access to full-text evidence based practice information for therapists, and classes to improve therapists' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors related to evidence-based practice. Participants had the opportunity to learn to ask questions, search for evidence, and download articles using therapy databases. Classes and database access were sponsored by a state therapy association.

Results/Discussion: Outcomes were measured in terms of cost to the organization, member recruitment, use of the database (frequency of log-ins and access to full-text articles), qualitative comments by people who have taken the class, and a learning outcome survey that measures knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors.

Conclusion: Occupational therapists have been slow to adopt EBP. Two factors are lack of access to full-text articles, and training. Our professional organizations can play an important role in promoting EBP through a systematic approach to access and clinical applications.

Contribution to Practice/Evidence-base of OT: The outcomes of this program will help determine whether improved access to evidence-based practice literature and training about database searches related to ones clinical setting will change the behaviors of occupational therapists in the clinical setting.