

0560

Historical Landmarks and the Future of Occupational Therapy

Franklin Stein

University of South Dakota, Vermillion, South Dakota, United States

Occupational therapy as a healthcare profession has changed dramatically from its official founding in 1917 during World War I. In this workshop the speaker will explore some of the important issues in the healthcare system globally that have shaped the course of occupational therapy such as the rise of scientific medicine, community based treatment, evidence-based practice, social class disparities and alternative medicine. The early paradigms of clinical practice will be compared to the emerging trends in occupational therapy that have implications for the future. As practice changes internationally, diverse models of occupational therapy have evolved. How did the early pioneers of occupational therapy define practice? What are some of the guiding principles that are the core of international occupational therapy? The speaker will also examine the goals of occupational therapy education and how it prepares students to become scientific practitioners.

The specific aims of the presentation are: 1. discuss the current directions in health care,

2. compare the early models of occupational therapy practice in rehabilitation with current practice and future trends, 3. examine five core humanistic issues that define occupational therapy, 4. analyze the goals of occupational therapy education in the 21st century.

Occupational therapy as a health profession is vitally tied historically to the medical model as well as non-medical models such as education and sociology. How can we as health practitioners maintain our unique identity as other health care professions expand their roles and sometimes overlap with what we do as occupational therapists? In this historical perspective the presenter concludes that occupational therapists have developed internationally into a respected health care profession working in diverse environments as healers, health model teachers and ergonomic specialists. It is important for occupational therapists to have knowledge of their historical roots in understanding our current role as a health care practitioner. As we understand our history we will have a better understanding of how to define our roles in a complex world.