

## **Thera-Green: Occupational Therapy's Role in Preserving the Earth**

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We live at a time when the need to preserve the earth has become imperative. It has become even more crucial for those in developing countries who are the hardest hit by natural calamities caused by climate change. However, it has only been recently that some occupational therapy scholars have underscored the important role occupational therapists play in the preservation of the earth. Relatively little has been written or discussed regarding the subject.

This paper presents the experience of an occupational therapist from a developing country working with an environmental group. Using a narrative method, his experience as both an environmentalist and occupational therapist is explored. Issues that have emanated from his experience include the perception that his training as an OT is inadequate if not totally unrelated to his work as an environmentalist; the dissociation between his "therapist-self" and "environmentalist-self"; and uncertainty about occupational therapy's role in the preservation of the environment.

This presentation will hopefully initiate dialogue among occupational therapists regarding the possible role of the profession in environmental protection. Issues such as the congruence between the domain of concern of occupational therapy and the principles of environmentalism; the adequacy of occupational therapy education in preparing practitioners to deal with environmental issues; and research and advocacy needed in this area warrant discussion and debate.