

Client-Centred Practice: What is the role of Occupational Therapists at the 'macro' level?

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Introduction: Over the past few decades, occupational therapists and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists have embraced client-centred practice as integral to occupational therapy. Restall and Ripat (2008) proposed that occupational therapists identify the importance of client advocacy at micro-, meso, and macro-system levels to improve client outcomes, however few occupational therapists have the knowledge or skills to advocate beyond the context of individual client (micro-) and practice settings (meso-) level. The authors believe that advocacy for client-centred practice at the macro (government, policy and legislation) level is important to facilitate change and advance practice.

Objectives: In our poster we present arguments for and against advocacy by occupational therapy clinicians at the macro level. The goal in sharing our debate experience is to promote dialogue among clinicians, facilitate reflection, and share strategies for clinicians or managers to advocate at the macro-level.

Description: As occupational therapists enrolled in a Master's program at the University of Manitoba, the authors undertook a debate as part of a course "Facilitating Client-Centred Practice". The debate process is shown in a poster format with 1.) A review of the literature 2.) A presentation of opposing views, and 3.) A discussion of strategies to increase involvement of occupational therapy advocacy at the macro level.

Discussion: There is a gap between the knowledge and application of client-centred practice. As a profession, occupational therapy must be committed to advocating for occupational rights at the political level (Hammell, 2006).

Conclusions: Occupational therapists must increase their involvement in advocacy beyond the individual level (micro level) and practice setting (meso level) to truly be client-centred. The debate process was recognized as a strategy to promote dialogue, which led to advocacy at the macro level by clinicians in the course.

Contribution to the practice: The authors believe that sharing their experience and providing a framework, will promote advocacy and discussion to advance occupational therapy practice.

Hammell, K.W. (2006). Perspectives on disability and rehabilitation: Contesting assumptions; challenging practice. Edinburgh, UK, Churchill Livingstone Elsevier.

Restall, G. & Ripat, J. (2008). Applicability and clinical utility of the Client-Centred Strategies Framework. Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 75, 288-300.