

Expanding Occupational Therapy's Role in Assessment of Community Mobility Skills and Expanded Access to Public Transportation

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Scope and Field: 3.3 Community and/or Community Work

Age Group: 4.6 Across the life span

Length of time: 1.5 hours In-Congress Workshop

A civil right and tenet of the American's With Disabilities Act states that "No entity shall discriminate against an individual with a disability in connection with the provision of transportation services." (section 37.5) Public transportation is firmly in the area of Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) as a performance area of occupation. Occupational Therapy practioners recognize the need to expand their role and services in the arena of public transportation and it is this presentations aim to provide participants with the foundation skills needed to collaborate with the state and local agencies mandated to provide these services. Additionally, participants will gain insight into leveraging funding for their service provision, as well as learn about the data needed by the transportation agencies.

A unique partnership between Del Mar College with assistance provided by OT students and the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority in Texas has been instrumental in the development of a systematic, non-discriminative assessment and training that supports participation in the performance context of occupation. The partnership recognizes that health is supported and maintained when individuals are engaged in occupation, thus expanding their social participation. Occupational Therapists are uniquely trained to assist in the process of Para-transit eligibility determination.

Over the past five years the partners have established guidelines for the eligibility assessment of both urban and rural riders of the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority. Conference participants will receive samples of these documents and will have the opportunity to work in small groups and experience elements of the eligibility assessment for both cognitive and physical demands, as well as opportunities for expanded interface of services within the public transportation environment. Additionally, the presentation will cover the development of agreements with non-traditional Occupational Therapy partners, and the benefits to the student therapists, the consumers, and state agencies.