

Unpacking the advocacy role of occupational therapists in promoting the rights of employees with disabilities

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Introduction: Advocacy is a valuable intervention tool in the return-to-work process but literature indicates that this role is poorly understood by among others occupational therapists. The purpose of this workshop is to generate knowledge to fill the knowledge gap in relation to how occupational therapists working in the field of vocational rehabilitation engage in advocacy across the various stages/phases of vocational rehabilitation. The workshop further seeks to engage with the intricacies of advocacy in the inter-system/inter-agency context of the workplace, in relation to complex cultural, social, political and power dynamics. The knowledge generated will assist occupational therapists working in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

Learning objectives: The participants will:

- 1. Have an overview of the vocational rehabilitation process.
- 2. Understand the intricacies and constructs of advocacy.
- 3. Explore the intricacies of advocacy in relation to the vocational rehabilitation process with case studies from the public and private health sectors
- 4. Identify knowledge occupational therapists should have to advocate for the client's ability to assert their rights in relation to the workplace.

Description of teaching methods:

- Didactic methods - in the overview and theoretical constructs.
- Active learning - participants will apply the intricacies of advocacy to case studies.
- Small group learning - participants will work in groups as they apply the theory.
- Engagement - between the presenters and participants.
- Discussion - the workshop will conclude with sharing participant perceptions of the occupational therapist's advocacy role in vocational rehabilitation.