

Mentoring in Occupational Therapy: A Scoping Review

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Introduction: Mentoring is a relationship and process aimed to advance learning and development. In occupational therapy, mentoring is perceived as central for skill acquisition, yet the essential elements of effective mentoring are difficult to quantify and measure.

Objective: to identify evidence-based mentoring practices in occupational therapy and their outcomes.

Method: A scoping review is a systematic process of data collection according to specific criteria, aimed to map the existing information and evidence on a topic and to identify gaps in knowledge or research. Of the initially 718 articles found on mentoring and occupational therapy, 25 met the inclusion criteria. Data from these studies were thoroughly analyzed to identify the conceptual definitions of mentoring, key elements used in the process, the mentoring participants, setting and contexts, research methods, measures, and outcomes.

Results: Mentoring is utilized in all stages of the occupational therapy professional development, beginning with students, through novice to expert practitioners, and in teaching and research. Although the focus and content of mentoring changes in each context, the foundational elements of best mentoring remain the same. A meaningful process includes psychosocial support, clear structure, reflection, and practical individualized goals. Outcomes of mentoring include a sense of belonging, satisfaction, productivity and advancing expertise.

Conclusions: receiving, providing and enabling quality mentoring across the occupational therapy professional development continuum is essential for our development, and well-being as diverse individuals and as a profession. Guidelines derived from this scoping review demonstrate how to achieve best outcomes for the mentor, mentee, and the workplace.