



Ethical Issues in Occupational Therapy

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The following discussion questions are provided as an additional educational tool to accompany this fireside chat video. Please feel free to select the questions that are most relevant to your committee or group, revise and adapt them as needed, etc. As always, we welcome feedback on this or any other NSHEN resource.

Questions:

- What did you learn from this interview?
- Jonathan mentions that OTs working in publicly funded systems are faced with challenges around gate keeping of scarce publicly funded resources. He mentions the example of having to determine based on patient needs, which patient gets a wheelchair from a limited (loaner) supply pool. How do value judgements come into play in the occupational therapist's conscious decision making process?
- What does client centered care mean to you?
- Discuss the difference between doing what the patient wants and what is in the patient's best interest.
- In your opinion, how can occupational therapists manage their impartiality in cases where they feel that a particular vendor is acting unethically?
- Impartiality may be a challenge for OTs living and practicing in rural areas, where they may know the client outside a professional context and there may be limited access to OTs. Discuss different ways to manage relationships in such situations.
- Jonathan mentions that where health care team may often feel that assessment for capacity is needed for the patient to manage at home on their own, occupational therapists may not necessarily experience such ethical concerns in the same way, because they are trained to find solutions to maximise independence and minimize risk. Do you agree with this? Why/why not?
- Jonathan lists various resources, including the College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia, to contact when encountering ethical concerns in practice. Discuss different strategies to address ethical challenges you encounter in your work.

Resources

Atwal, A. and K. Caldwell. 2003. Ethics, occupational therapy and discharge planning: Four broken principles. Australian Occupational Therapy Journal; Vol 50 (4): 244-251 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1046/j.1440-1630.2003.00374.x>

Code of Ethics – Commitment to Good Practice. College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia. <http://cotns.ca/assets/Standards-and-guidelines/Code-of-Ethics-Final.pdf>

Code of Ethics. Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists <https://www.caot.ca/site/pt/codeofethics?nav=sidebar>

College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia. Practice Standards and Guidelines: <http://cotns.ca/quality-practice/standards-of-practice/>

College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. 2012. Conscious Decision-Making in Occupational Therapy Practice. Revised September 2012 Originally Issued June 2002. https://www.coto.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/conscious_decision_making.pdf

College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. 2017. Guidelines for Working with Third Party Payers https://www.coto.org/docs/defaultsource/PDFs/guidelines_for_working_with_third_party_payers_2017.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Jajesnica Foye, S., Kirschner, K.L., Brady Wagner, L.C., Stocking, C. and Siegler, M. 2015. Ethical Issues in Rehabilitation: A Qualitative Analysis of Dilemmas Identified by Occupational Therapists. *Topics in Stroke Rehabilitation*. Page 89-101. Published online: 18 Feb 2015

Levack, W.M.M. 2009 Ethics in Goal Planning for Rehabilitation: A Utilitarian Perspective. *Clinical Rehabilitation*; 23, 345-351

Stromsdorfer, Sarah. Ethical Dilemmas in Occupational Therapy, blog post, My OT Spot [accessed online April 17, 2019] <https://www.myotspot.com/ethical-dilemmas-in-occupational-therapy/>
OT standards / code of ethics

Barnitt, R. 1998. Ethical dilemmas in occupational therapy and physical therapy: a survey of practitioners in the UK National Health Service, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, June 24(3): 193-199 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1377523/>

Bushby, K., J. Chan, S. Druif, K. Ho, E.A. Kinsella. 2015. Ethical Tensions in Occupational Therapy Practice: A scoping review. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*; Vol 78, Issue 4. Special Collection. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0308022614564770>

Jajesnica Foye, S., Kirschner, K.L., Brady Wagner, L.C., Stocking, C. and Siegler, M. 2015. Ethical Issues in Rehabilitation: A Qualitative Analysis of Dilemmas Identified by Occupational Therapists. *Topics in Stroke Rehabilitation*. Page 89-101. Published online: 18 Feb 2015

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