

Introduction

- The life history of Ron Meier is one of 29 life history interviews which are part of a larger project titled, *Life Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) in North Dakota and Wyoming*.
- The purpose of the project is to gather information about the history and evolution of OT practice in North Dakota and Wyoming through life histories of individuals who have been influential in developing OT in these two states. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information.
- This study is intended to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how OT practice has evolved from its inception to current practice in North Dakota and Wyoming.

Literature Review

- In 1983, North Dakota State Board of Occupational Therapy Practice was established. This board provides licensure to occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants in North Dakota (Archives - State Agencies - Board of Occupational Therapy Practice, n.d.)
- During the interview, Ron spoke about the importance of reimbursement, licensure, and legislation changes that occurred throughout his career, and the pros and cons of each. Reed and Peters (2008) state that these concept, among many others such as research and role function, were a primary concern between 1970 and 1985.

Methodology

- This research design is a qualitative study using a life history approach. Our participant, Ron Meier, was assigned to us from a list developed by the course instructors through purposive sampling. There were no gatekeeper issues, as the course instructors made initial contact with the participant. Informed consent was given and received from participant prior to the interview.
- The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the course instructors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals interviewed as part of the larger project. The Kawa Model guided some of the questions that were posed. The researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each specific interview. Data was collected via phone interview. It lasted approximately one hour.

Description of Participant

Ron Meier graduated in 1971 from the University of North Dakota (UND) with a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy. He worked in multiple locations throughout MN and ND, often filling leadership positions and creating clinical affiliations within health care facilities.

- From 1971-1973, Ron was a supervisor at the North Dakota State Hospital in Jamestown
- From 1973-1987, Ron was the Director of Occupational Therapy at St. Ansgar Hospital in Moorhead, MN. Here he developed five programs including partial hospitalization and cardiac rehabilitation
- From 1987-1990, Ron was Director of the Adult Psychiatric Unit and Occupational Therapy Departments at Behavioral Healthcare Centers in Moorhead, MN
- From 1990-2010, Ron worked at what is now Trinity Hospital in Minot, ND. Here he held management and director positions for the Behavioral Health unit
- Ron was also a part of multiple professional organizations during his career; his most notable position being President of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Association from 1974-1976



Data Analysis/Findings

- Prior to the interview, researchers obtained data from Ron's resume and a newspaper article from the Minot Daily News in June of 2010 regarding Ron's retirement from Trinity Hospital.
- Data was then collected through a semi-structured interview. Interview was transcribed verbatim and memoed by two researchers. Transcription was then sent to the participant for member checking, and clarifications were made.
- Data was then coded and four main categories with corresponding themes were created. Researchers developed an audit trail throughout the analysis process to gain trustworthiness.
- Categories/Themes Identified:
 1. Relationships
 - Formed many close relationships with staff
 - Relationships fostered his love for his career
 2. Successes
 - Established and administered multiple programs that influenced the growth of OT in ND
 - Held many positions that lead to a successful career in mental health
 3. Challenges
 - Overcame many challenges in his career which was influenced by the time period in which he was practicing
 4. OT Expansion
 - The occupational therapy profession went through many changes regarding education and a transformation of concepts used in practice during his career

Discussion/Conclusions

- Ron calls his becoming an occupational therapist "fate." He thought he was applying to the physical therapy department at UND, and received an acceptance letter back that he got into the occupational therapy program; he decided to give it a try.
- Throughout Ron's career, he formed many relationships and achieved success, despite having to adapt to the expansion of occupational therapy and the challenges that came with the time period he was practicing in.
- Some challenges that Ron pointed out specifically were regarding the development and upkeep of programs, changes in reimbursement, budget issues, leading other disciplines, and changes in administration at the hospital.
- Literature also suggests that there were many changes within the profession at the time of Ron's career including licensure, reimbursement, research, and legislation that would have greatly impacted the profession. Ron accepted these changes and challenges and thought that it was good for the profession because OT was finally getting the recognition they deserved, and expanding into new and needed areas of practice.
- The state of North Dakota and the profession of occupational therapy should be thankful that fate brought us an OT like Ron. Ron Meier was a pioneer and leader in the state. He was instrumental in establishing programs that met the diverse needs of residents of ND and was active in numerous professional organizations advocating for the role of OT in multiple health care environments.

Thank You!

We would like to thank Ron Meier for his time and participation in our life history study. We enjoyed learning about Ron's experiences and the impact he had on both occupational therapy in North Dakota, as well as in the mental health setting. We would also like to thank our course instructors, Dr. Jedlicka and Dr. Bass.

References

- Archives - State Agencies - Board of Occupational Therapy Practice. (n.d.). Retrieved November 28, 2017, from <http://history.nd.gov/archives/stateagencies/occupationaltherapy.html>
- Reed, K.L. & Peters, C. O. (October 6, 2008). Occupational therapy values and beliefs, Part IV: A time of professional identity, 1970-1985. *OT Practice*, 13(18), 15-18.