

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Lanae Pickard, OTR/L, CHT

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Introduction

- The life history one of 30 life history interviews which are a part of a larger project, *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 occupational therapy (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 occupational therapy practice has evolved from its inception to current practice in North Dakota and Wyoming.

Participant Description

- Lanae Pickard began her career as an OTR in an inpatient hospital setting in 1984 after she graduated from the University of North Dakota.
- She is from Moorhead, Minnesota, but has been practicing OT in Wyoming for her entire 38-year career.
- Prior to becoming an OTR, Lanae was a certified OTA for 4 years.
- Her career extends to years of teaching, serving as a president of WYOTA, and molding new therapists as a mentor and educator.
- Lanae Pickard has additional certifications in hand therapy and specializes in occupational medicine.
- She served three terms as the WYOTA President (6 years total).
- Her career as an OT practitioner included her working in acute care inpatient units, pediatrics, hospitals, home health, and outpatient clinics.



Photo provided by Lanae Pickard, OTR/L, CHT

Literature Review

- In the 1980s, the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980 deemed occupational therapy as a benefiting and qualified health care service that addresses home health and outpatient rehabilitation facilities.
- “The activity, occupation ... Is significant, organized, involving, intentional, goal-directed, autotelic, and adaptive” (Yerxa, 1992, p. 79). Lanae continuously emphasized the importance of occupation in OT practice.
- “In response to the changing demands of higher education, the health care environment, and within occupational therapy, it is the position of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Board of Directors that the profession should take action to transition toward a doctoral-level single point of entry for occupational therapists, with a target date of 2025. Support of high quality entry-level doctoral education for occupational therapists will benefit the profession, consumers, and society” (AOTA, 2014). Lanae described her educational experience in relation to today’s curricula and how it impacts OT practice.

Methodology

- This was a qualitative study using a life history approach.
- Participant was assigned from a list developed by the project directors through purposive sampling.
- No specific gatekeeper issues as the initial contact was made by the project directors.
- Informed consent was given.
- One face-to-face interview was conducted and was approximately one hour and fifteen minutes in length.
- The interview took place in a small office at the participant’s place of work in Casper, WY.
- The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the project directors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals interviewed as part of the larger project. The researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each specific interview.
- The data collected consisted of an audio-recorded interview which was later transcribed verbatim. The transcription was analyzed by identifying codes, and then categories, themes, and assertions were formed.

Data Analysis and Findings

- For this study, the KAWA model was used as the foundational theory to guide the process.
 - The main premise of this model is the river, which represents the individual and their “personal life history” (Turpin & Iwama, 2011).
- The categories that emerged from the codes of the transcription are: becoming successful, background, and building a foundation.
- These categories were then analyzed to find themes to obtain an understanding of Lanae Pickard, OTR/L.
 - From these themes, an overall assertion was then formulated.

Data Analysis and Findings Continued

- **Becoming successful:**
 - Based on Lanae’s experiences, continuing education and additional certifications are crucial for practice.
 - Lanae believes that staying active in organizations will help keep OTs up to date.
 - Trust in your own knowledge and education during practice.
- **Background:**
 - Lanae suggests finding a setting that you have a passion for.
 - Accepting feedback from coworkers and clients has helped Lanae improve her practice.
 - Lanae has genuinely enjoyed going to work every day.
- **Building a Foundation:**
 - Lanae believes that contributing to research to broaden OT is an important element of practice.
 - Lanae has always made sure to clarify differences between PT and OT to clients/coworkers important for practice
 - Lanae stressed to encourage, listen, and guide entry level OTs in practice.

Conclusion

- **Assertion:** Lanae described her background and strategies to build a foundation in occupational therapy as pursuing continuing education, staying active in OT related organizations, and finding a setting that you have a passion for. Lanae explained that becoming successful as a practitioner entails contributing to OT research and clarifying differences between OT and other professions.
- This case study has given insight into how OT practice and education has changed over time in a rural state like Wyoming. Lanae is an experienced and practicing OT who has identified various methods to become a successful and effective OT. These include partaking in continuing education as a professional and in organizations at local, state, and national levels. Similarly, Lanae has been an active advocate for the OT profession which has been an aid in the foundational aspects of OT, specifically in regard to other disciplines. Lanae is an active member of her community and a passionate OT, thus has made a lasting impact on OT practice in Wyoming.

References

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