

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Christina Frank, OTR/L

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Introduction

The life history of Christina Frank is 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.

- 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 from the views of influential graduates from the University of North Dakota in both the Grand Forks, ND and Casper, WY locations. It is anticipated that the information and the process of gathering this information of this project will be powerful to past and present students, faculty, and practitioners in the field of occupational therapy and other professionals.
- For the particular life history of Christina Frank, a semi-structured interview was conducted between the student researchers and Christina Frank. It was audio recorded, transcribed, and coded. Christina also provided the student researchers a copy of her resume to use for their project.

Description of Participant

Christina earned a Bachelor's of Science in Occupational Therapy and has been dedicated to her work and family since.

- Christina began her career in occupational therapy after graduating from the University of North Dakota in December of 1992. She became certified by the American Occupational Therapy Association in February of 1993.
- Christina has a variety of work experience, including: inpatient acute care, outpatient care, long term care, lymphedema treatment, home care, ergonomic assessments and recommendations, work safety program development, work safety instruction and training, cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation programs, school system, psychiatric, and weight management program development and facilitation with nursing.
- Christina is currently employed at Northwood Deaconess Health Center in Northwood, ND and is a student fieldwork education supervisor.
- Christina currently resides with her husband and five children. She and her husband started foster care in 2009 and have fostered 12 children total, five of which they adopted.

Methodology

A qualitative research study using a life history approach was used to allow the focus to be on Christina Frank's involvement in the evolution of occupational therapy practice.

- This participant was assigned from a larger list developed by the course instructors through purposive sampling. Initial contact with Mrs. Frank was made from the course instructors of OT 458, and then a follow-up email was constructed from the student researchers introducing themselves and further describing the study.
- IRB approval was obtained from the University of North Dakota and informed consent was obtained.
- A semi-structured interview was conducted lasting 52 minutes and was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the course instructors.
- The KAWA theoretical model was used to guide the research process. This model uses the metaphor of a river and its elements to describe one's life journey (Teah & Iwama, 2015).



Permission was granted from Christina Frank to use this picture.

Literature Review

Listed below are significant events that have occurred since Christina began school.

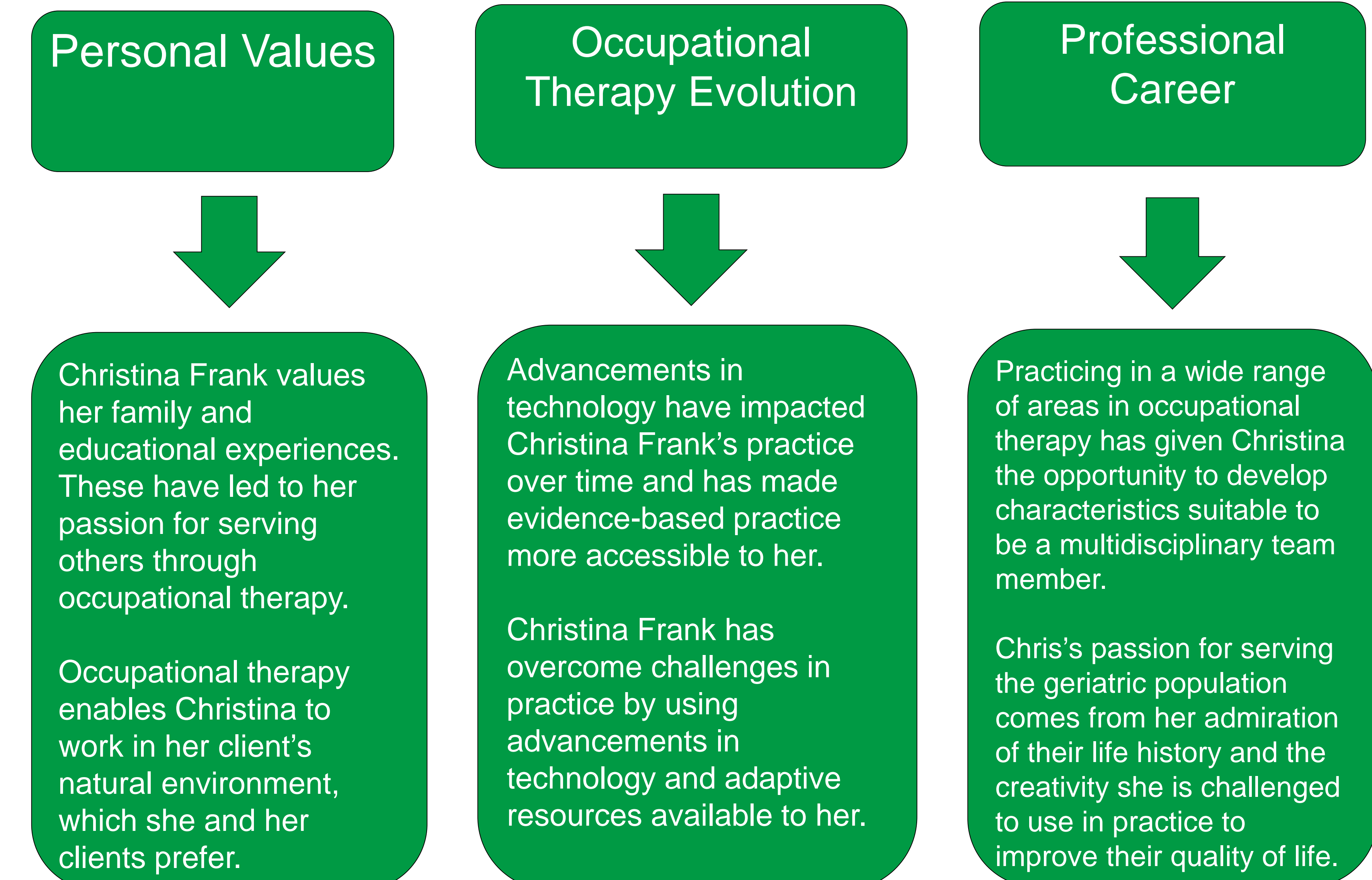
- The Individuals with Disabilities Act is signed into law in 1990 (AOTA, 2018)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed by H. W. Bush in 1990 (AOTA, 2018)
- The AOTA Standards and Ethics Commission publishes the "Core Values of Occupational Therapy" in 1993 (AOTA, 2018)
- Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (AOTA, 2018)
- In 2002, AOTA adopted the *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process* to replace *Uniform Terminology* (AOTA, 2018).
- In 2010, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act passed requirements for certain insurance plans to cover rehabilitation and habilitation (AOTA, 2018).



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Data Analysis

After the student researchers transcribed the data verbatim from the interview; they immersed themselves into their findings to create codes, categories, themes, and an assertion statement based on the life history of Christina Frank. Through the analysis of the interview transcription, the three categories that emerged were education, occupational therapy evolution, and professional career. Though the data analysis process, the researchers established trustworthiness by reflecting on their experiences as researchers and documented their biases to the study in order to increase the reliability and validity.



Discussion/Conclusion

Assertion:

Life as an occupational therapist for Chris Frank means finding and using your personal strengths to work in a variety of settings. She has adapted to healthcare changes across time, overcome practice challenges, and served others to improve their quality of life.

Conclusion:

The interview with Christina Frank provided a deep insight and understanding of her life throughout her occupational therapy career. The researchers were able to gain a sense of the major turning points in her life and the barriers she faced that lead to her accomplishments and contributions to the profession of occupational therapy in North Dakota. Since Christina entered the workforce, there has been major changes to practice. Christina was successful in staying true to herself and her practice, as well as adapting to the changes in OT and the healthcare system.

References

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2018). Events from 1990-1999. American Occupational Therapy Association Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.otcentennial.org/events/1990>

Teah, J. Y. & Iwama, M. K. (2015). The Kawa model made easy: A guide to applying the Kawa model in occupational therapy practice (2nd ed.). Retrieved from www.kawamodel.com