

Evolution of Occupational Therapy: Life History of Lacey Konickson, OTR/L, CLT

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Introduction

- The life history of Lacey Konickson was one of 31 life history interviews conducted apart of a larger study of *Life History of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) in North Dakota and Wyoming*.
- The purpose of this study is to gather information about individuals, like Lacey Konickson, who have been influential in developing OT in North Dakota and Wyoming and their life histories.
- The findings of this study will be used to provide current and future occupational therapists with a overview of the life history and how OT practice has changed from its commencement to current practice in North Dakota and Wyoming.
- This life history of Lacey Konickson is a case study that examined the life as an OT practitioner in rural Minnesota.

Description of Participant

- Lacey Konickson graduate from the University of North Dakota's Masters in Occupational Therapy program in 2007
- Lacey is a certified lymphedema therapist, and has additional certifications in LSVT BIG and Graston Technique.
- She has been working at Altru Health System Regional Therapy Services in Grand Fork, ND since 2007.
- Lacey's job at Altru Health System Regional Therapy Services includes traveling to locations east of Grand Forks in rural Minnesota.
- Her career as a rural health occupational therapist includes working with a variety of populations ranging from pediatrics to older adults.
- Lacey works in a variety of settings including the Red Lake Fall School District, Skilled Nursing Facilities and outpatient clinics.
- Lacey is a member of the school board in Red Lake Falls School District.

Data Analysis & Findings

- The researchers coded the data to determine common themes based on the participant's responses.
- From the codes, three categories emerged, and themes were created based on these categories.
- One final assertion was made regarding the data while taking the codes, categories and themes into account.

THEMES:

– OT Experience:

- Job shadowing in multiple areas of practice is important as an occupational therapy student.
- Helping others and their families motivated Lacey to become an OT.
- Lacey wanted to work in physical dysfunction, which influenced her choice to learn more about adaptive technology and obtain further certifications after graduation.
- Being truthful and accurate in documentation is important due to insurance changes that are occurring.

– Rural Health:

- It is easy for Lacey to build rapport with her clients because they share similar interests and hobbies.
- Communication with clients and other healthcare professionals is important in rural health.
- Trust and confidence in interdisciplinary team members is extremely important when treating clients.
- Lacey values having supports, such as a mentor, in rural health settings.

– Values & Beliefs

- Lacey believes that the foundation of occupational therapy is providing occupation-based interventions.
- Lacey believes being a lifelong learning is valuable as an OT.
- Lacey believes being licensed to practice is mandatory to show clients and other professionals that we are qualified to provide treatment
- Lacey believes teamwork and evidence-based practice is important in every aspect of treatment

Discussion / Conclusions

- **ASSERTION:** As a rural health practitioner, Lacey believes in using interpersonal skills, being a life long learner, and demonstrating competency in personal and professional ethics is key to providing optimal client care.
- Lacey's values and beliefs are the foundation that she builds her occupational therapy services from. She stands by her values and beliefs and employs them when treating clients and interacting with other healthcare professionals.
- Literature suggests that there are multiple changes occurring in the insurance world, making it harder to receive reimbursement for occupational therapy services. Lacey welcomed these changes with an open mind and felt they challenged her to use more evidenced-based practice in her treatment sessions.
- Lacey enjoys working as a occupational therapist in a rural setting because she gets to work in a variety of settings with a variety of populations; this keeps her motivated to work as an OT.
- Lacey is extremely passionate about helping others, which motivated her to become an OT. She stated that the most rewarding part of her job is the meaningful connections she gets to make with her clients and the effect those connections have on her client's and their families during the recovery process.

Literature Review

- In 2006, AOTA adopted the Centennial Vision. "We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven, and evidence-based profession with globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society's occupational needs" (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2017).
- A statement was released in 1984 that described the key differences between an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. This role clarification made OT's purpose more visible and reimbursable as a healthcare service (Reed & Peters, 2008).
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid services recently adopted a new Medicare Part A SNF PPS Payment model called the Patient Driven Payment Model. Although changes don't go into effect until October 1, 2019, occupational therapist must start preparing for this for this payment model now (AOTA, 2018).

Methodology

- The study used a qualitative life history approach.
- The participant interviewed was selected from a participant list compiled through purposive sampling by the project directors.
- IRB was obtained by the project directors.
- Initial contact was made by the project directors with no specific gatekeeper issues.
- Informed consent was obtained prior to the study.
- Based on the Kawa Model, the project directors provided researchers with a semi-formatted interview schedule. 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 add or modify interview questions as needed for each specific interview.
- The interview lasted 48 minutes and was completed via Zoom. Researchers completed the interview at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The participant completed the interview at her home.
- The interview was audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and was organized into codes, categories, themes, and an assertion by the two researchers.
- Components of trustworthiness:
 - Trustworthiness was established as the two researchers debriefed following each step of the study. In addition, a verbatim transcription and reflexive journal was completed and were used in developing an audit trail.
 - Researcher Triangulation- Two researchers were involved in the analysis of the data to decrease bias.
 - Credibility: The data was obtained directly from Lacey Knoickson; therefore, the data is assumed to be true and credible.

Acknowledgments

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