

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of

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Introduction

- This life history is one of 30 life history interviews which are part of a larger project, Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) at the National Level and Beyond.
- The purpose of study is 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 through the life history stories of occupational therapists who have held leadership roles at the national level and beyond. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information.

Literature Review

- In 1986, The American Occupational Therapy Certification Board created to separate AOTA membership from certification (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2019).
- The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 increased the maximum annual payment for outpatient psychiatric occupational therapy and includes occupational therapy in the definition of partial hospitalization services (National Network, 2019).
- In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The law allows people with disabilities to have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else (National Network, 2019).
- ADA extends Medicare coverage allowing community mental health centers to provide partial hospitalization mental health services, including occupational therapy (AOTA, 2019).
- In the early 1990s, a decrease in mental health practice caused by changes in reimbursement, education, treatment, and treatment environments led to a debate about whether mental health practice should remain in the scope of practice for occupational therapy (D'Amico, Jaffe, & Gibson, 2010).
- In the spring of 2002, the POTAC published a newsletter establishing priorities for Californians with mental illness which serves as a guide for program development, advocacy, treatment, and education (California Coalition for Mental Health, 2002).
- In 2008, ACOTE revisions on the criteria for entry-level doctoral-degree programs and entry-level master's degree programs for OTs were performed (AOTA, 2019).

Dr. Anne MacRae

- Dr. Anne MacRae received her PhD in Human Science at Saybrook Graduate School, her Master's degree in Occupational Therapy from San Jose State University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Antioch College. Dr. MacRae is fascinated with neurology and how the brain works. Dr. MacRae grew up in an environment where social issues were prevalent, so finding occupational therapy was a blessing to her. She was awarded the Board Certification in Mental Health in 2006. She has experience with cross-cultural and international consultation and is the recipient of multiple Fulbright Fellowship awards. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Occupational Therapy Association of California in 2019. Dr. MacRae recently finished the 4th edition of her book *Psychosocial Occupational Therapy: An Evolving Practice*.



Methodology

- **Participant Selection:** The participant was selected from a participant list compiled through purposive sampling by the project directors. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview and the project was approved by the UND Institutional Review Board and because of the study design the formal IRB process was waived.
- **Interview Schedule:** 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 student researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each specific interview.

Data Analysis and Findings

- A one-hour interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and coded with 23 codes.
- From the 23 codes, four categories with two themes for each category emerged.
- The Kawa Model served as a guide to develop the interview questions and also for the data analysis process.
- Triangulation involved the use of member checking to clarify and confirm the information included in the transcription was an accurate reflection of her career history.
- Through the data analysis process, the researchers established trustworthiness by reflecting on their experiences as researchers and documented their biases in order to increase the reliability and validity.

Perspectives on Mental Health Practice

- Dr. MacRae is passionate about mental health; she appreciates the contributions that the profession of occupational therapy brings. Dr. MacRae stated, "The parts that I most enjoyed and most gravitated towards were underrepresented in the actual profession and many of the situations that it was too medically driven for me. And I had concerns about that from the very beginning." She expressed feelings of concern and discomfort regarding mental health in the United States as compared to other countries in which she has practiced.

Teams

- Dr. MacRae discusses how personal attributes, collaboration, and support of colleagues/friends contribute to the way teams work across different healthcare settings. Dr. MacRae expressed that "You develop friends by being a friend. So I hope to be a good mentor and a good support for my colleagues. And they will be for me." Dr. MacRae believes that occupational therapy, other professions, and the client make-up a team and she explains that each individual within the team is unique.

Social Issues

- Dr. MacRae has hope for the future of social issues in the United States and believes there is a place in occupational therapy for increasing the awareness of mental health and reimbursement methods. Dr. MacRae stated, "It's also wonderful to see how it gets translated into different practices, different cultural venues, again, different reimbursement systems under systems that are socialized." She expresses interest in consultation work overseas for various cultures and gravitates towards working in unconventional environments, specifically community programming.

Professional Journey

- Dr. MacRae's professional journey is not limited to her career in occupational therapy; she expands her leadership roles to advocate for underrepresented populations. When asked about the context of practice during the time that she graduated, Dr. MacRae stated that "The 90's was when I started getting back to my roots, more socially oriented kinds of problems and issues. It's been a major thrust in my career." Dr. MacRae has many accomplishments that have further developed as a result of her education, collaboration with faculty members, and model development.

Discussion and Conclusion

- Dr. MacRae has dedicated her career in occupational therapy to advocating for social issues in mental health practice as seen by her various accomplishments and work with underrepresented populations which could not be done without the contribution of teamwork between other healthcare professionals.
- Dr. MacRae's passion for occupational therapy was evident through her responses to life history questions and overall engaging demeanor.
- Dr. MacRae has demonstrated exceptional leadership at San Jose State University, within the Occupational Therapy Association of California, nationally, and internationally. She sheds light on occupational therapy's role in mental health and social issues occurring within and outside of the United States. Her work advocating for social justice has been influential within the profession of occupational therapy.

Acknowledgments

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