



CARFIT: FIND SAFETY AND COMFORT BEHIND THE WHEEL

Introduction

CarFit, created by the American Occupational Therapy Association, with the American Automobile Association and AARP, provides occupational therapists with a proactive entry point with individuals and groups regarding the occupation of driving.

CarFit, jointly supported by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) and the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) in Canada, is an educational program helps drivers feel safe and comfortable behind the wheel. Specifically, it teaches person-vehicle fit, builds awareness of aftermarket solutions, and provides community-specific driving resources. Prior to COVID-19, CarFit was delivered exclusively in person at group events. In response to the pandemic, restrictions, and the subsequent wider adoption of virtual engagement by people of all ages, CarFit has been adapted to offer a virtual stream, both in delivering the program to drivers, as well as to train occupational therapist volunteers who can deliver the program in person, from 1 on 1 through to group events again.



Method / Approach: Why do OTs avoid the car?



- 🚗 CarFit can enable occupational therapists to expand their intervention from the home environment to community mobility by addressing the vehicle as an equally valued environment.
- 🚗 CarFit can provide occupational therapists with a non-threatening entry point to address driving in daily life.
- 🚗 CarFit is part of preventative and proactive health care.

Shifting to continue to meet the needs of individuals is part of OT.

CarFit: Pre-COVID-19

- 🚗 in-person events
- 🚗 larger group events, outdoors
- 🚗 3 stations for drivers: Check In, Check Up and Check Out
- 🚗 CarFit conducted by trained Technicians, Coordinators and Instructors
- 🚗 12-point checklist reviewed with drivers to teach them about person-vehicle fit, e.g., distance to steering wheel, sight line over steering wheel, position of seat belt, etc.

CarFit: Virtual (COVID-19 response)

- 🚗 live, virtual presentation via online platforms
- 🚗 drivers can access recorded virtual presentation online, on demand
- 🚗 simplified checklist
- 🚗 online, on-demand Technician training

Results

Were we biased before? We thought:

- 🚗 in-person was the only way to educate drivers about person-vehicle fit
- 🚗 in-person was the only way to teach OTs about CarFit

What we learned by creating virtual CarFit:

- 🚗 broadened access to drivers, e.g., geographic reach to rural areas
- 🚗 older drivers adopted new technologies to access virtual events
- 🚗 reduces the fear of “evaluation” (although not a feature of CarFit, it remains a fear at in-person events)
- 🚗 encouraged empowerment with self-assessment of person-vehicle fit
- 🚗 people learn differently, and there remains at demand for in-person CarFit
- 🚗 OTs are less interested in volunteering at group in-person events
- 🚗 OTs are interested in referring individuals and groups to virtual CarFit
- 🚗 OTs are interested in delivering CarFit 1:1 with individuals (one-off, or with a series of clients at a single location)

Conclusions

COVID-19 has caused changes in adults' occupational participation including driving habits. The CarFit program, supported by CAOT and CAA, alongside collaboration with AOTA and the American CarFit Program, has adapted to enable a range of interventions in the important occupation of driving for older adults.

Recommendations

CAOT and CAA:

- 🚗 continue to explore what is a fit for OTs, CAA staff and drivers in Canada with the CarFit Program
- 🚗 test out options to access virtual CarFit, e.g., show the video at CAA Clubs, OT clinics or departments
- 🚗 solicit referrals to register and watch the Virtual CarFit hosted on the CAOT website
- 🚗 empower more OTs to offer CarFit 1:1

Interested in learning more?

Visit www.caot.ca/carfit. CarFit@caot.ca



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