



**CAOT - ACE**

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists  
Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes

# OT TRC TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

“Truth and Reconciliation -- a precursor to occupational justice”

NOVEMBER 2023

Submitted by the OT TRC Task Force

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## INTRODUCTION

Arguably, most Canadians have a knowledge gap in understanding how systemic racism, in particular, anti-Indigenous racism, has historically functioned and continues to do so in Canadian nation building. The profession of occupational therapy is no exception. As a strategy to respond to the call for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, the co-chairs (Angie Phenix and Kaarina Valavaara) of the OT TRC Task Force 2019-2023 have engaged in both educating and defining processes to move forward. The co-chairs, with many years of clinical practice and additional education around these issues, determined that one of the largest barriers facing the profession was a lack of foundational understanding of systemic racism and antiracism. An understanding of systemic racism is both a knowledge gap in the profession as well as a critical analysis that is needed prior to considering culture or engagement with Indigenous communities in Canada. Although engagement with Indigenous communities is a recommendation that the co-chairs will make as the OT TRC Task Force concludes, the basic gaps in education, knowledge and systems processes need to be addressed as a top priority.

As a summary of antiracism and systemically induced oppression, the foundational understanding of how the process of colonization came to produce systems of inequity through anti-Indigenous and anti-Black policy must be examined and developed. This is important as it sets the stage to understand how Indigenous and Black Peoples became the most oppressed and the populations most affected by the social and structural determinants of health. Occupational therapists tend to work with individuals who experience the most hardship and ill health, often exacerbated by underfunding and discrimination from systems and individual discrimination. Importantly, the profession is dominated by individuals that fall into the unearned dominant social positions and are typically assigned the most power and privilege (white, female, able bodied, cisgendered, hetero, middle/upper class, etc.) which often transfers to little understanding of unearned disadvantage and the realities of the lives of those who experience it.

The occupational therapy profession needs to engage with Indigenous leadership organizations in Canada, such as the [Assembly of First Nations](#), [Métis National Council](#), and [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#), in order to develop

meaningful and separate relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in Canada. This will avoid a pan-Indigenous approach that can be harmful. However, the co-chairs bring an understanding of antiracism and systemic racism that is a foundational in understanding the approach that is required.

As this unjust history still has implications in all aspects of Canadian society, all professions in Canada have an obligation and are accountable to responding to the calls for justice and reparations should be addressed. Leadership in Canada has typically upheld racist institutions and organizations that have not been concerned with truth or reconciliation efforts for the last 150 years. These institutions have been dedicated to either erasing, displacing, ignoring and actively harming Indigenous Peoples. Reconciliation is a priority, and all organizations and levels of government are required to respond. In Canada, occupational therapy leadership organizations have expressed a commitment to continue to engage on the journey towards reconciliation.

## BACKGROUND

### OT TRC Task Force 2019-2023

In June 2019, pursuant to the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) report, the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists' (CAOT) Board of Directors voted unanimously to convene the CAOT TRC Task Force to provide leadership in the development of an action plan for the profession of occupational therapy in Canada. The principal objective of the CAOT TRC Task Force was to promote leadership within occupational therapy in Canada, undertake sustainable and culturally safe occupational therapy research, engage in trauma-informed clinical practice, education, and foster reconciliation and decolonization of occupational therapy. The [Action Plan](#) utilized a systems approach, understanding that all targeted actions are interconnected and interrelated, and clustered initiatives or concrete projects under four themes: relationships, mental models, practices and policies, and power dynamics.

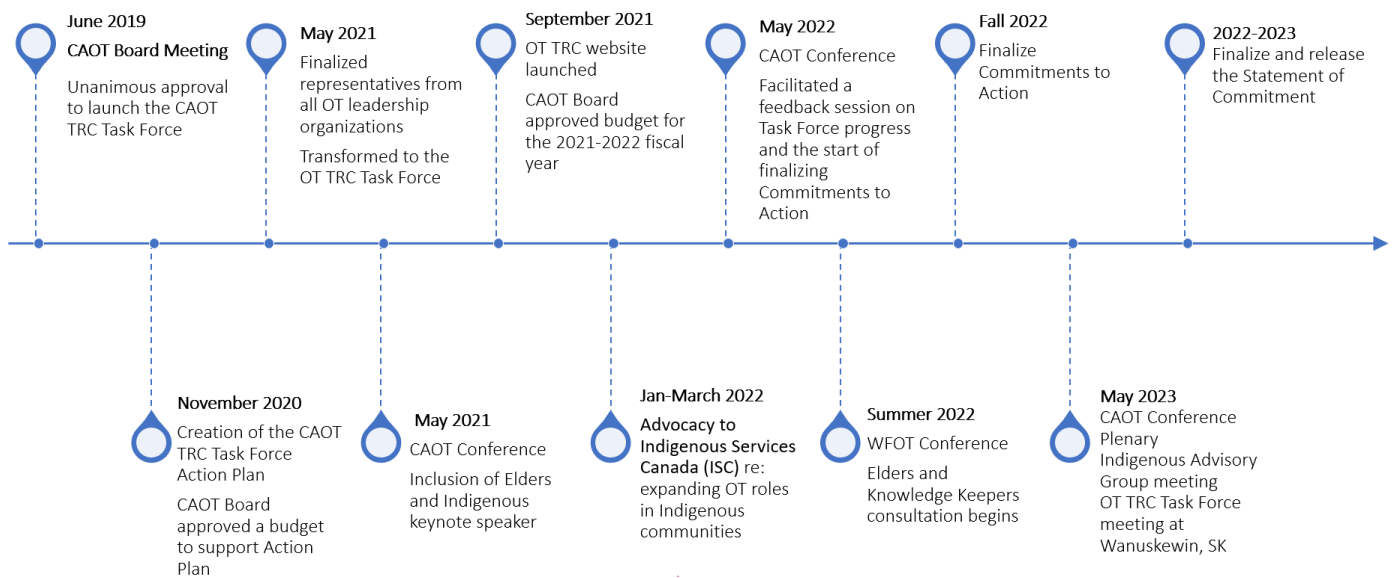
The CAOT TRC Task Force delivered its Action Plan to CAOT's Board in November 2020 with 13 recommendations and a budget of \$49,400 – the plan and budget received approval. At the November 2020

meeting, CAOT's Board also recommended that the CAOT TRC Task Force be expanded to include representatives from five occupational therapy leadership organizations to match the scope and scale of reconciliation within occupational therapy practice in Canada and pursue sustainable, lasting action.

In 2021, the governance structure of the Task Force was expanded to include representation from the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs (ACOTUP), the Alliance of Canadian Occupational Therapy Professional Associations (ACOTPA), the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO), and the Canadian Occupational Therapy Foundation (COTF). As such, the Task Force was renamed the OT TRC Task Force. Angie Phenix and Kaarina Valavaara continued as co-chairs and CAOT continued to serve as Secretariat. In October 2021, the CAOT Board approved a budget of \$49,400 for the fiscal year 2021-2022. Due to the disruptions of activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, in October 2022, the CAOT Board approved a final, extended year and budget of \$83, 600.

The phrase, “nothing about us without us” continued to be the underpinning of the OT TRC Task Force co-chairs’ approach to the work of the Task Force. “Nothing about us without us” underscores the importance of the full and direct participation of Indigenous Peoples in discussions and decisions about policies, programs and services that affect them. Since the establishment of the Task Force in 2019, the co-chairs as well as Indigenous occupational therapists and allies have been involved in Task Force initiatives, workshops, webinars, meetings with government departments, and provided input to the 2021 Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada, Promoting Occupational Participation: Collaborative Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy text, conference presentations (including plenary and sponsored sessions), all culminating in an invitation to the 2022 WFOT Congress (wherein the co-chairs’ presentation was well received by international occupational therapy associations). Please see *Figure 1* for an overview of the OT TRC Task Force progression and activities.

**Figure 1**



The requirement for engagement by Indigenous Peoples is already enshrined in Canadian law, supreme court decisions, as well as international instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The 2023 [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan](#), released by the Department of Justice, emphasizes the importance of Indigenous Peoples being able to “express and exercise their distinct rights, and enjoy living in Canada without interpersonal, systemic and institutional interference, oppression or other inequalities associated with Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination, wherever they reside” (p. 24). It also emphasizes the importance of Indigenous Peoples exercising the rights to participate in all decision-making matters that affect them (p. 39).

The co-chairs urge the CAOT Board to follow the principles of UNDRIP and the “mutually beneficial relationships” between Indigenous Peoples and settlers in Canada envisioned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in their priorities and actions. The co-chairs hope that the occupational therapy profession’s leadership will meaningfully partner with Indigenous occupational therapists, Indigenous occupational therapist assistants, and Indigenous communities to contribute to dismantling existing oppressive structures that result in systemic racism and the co-construction of systems that lead to social, economic, political reconciliation, and in the final analysis result in occupational justice- the underpinning of the occupational therapy profession.

As the OT TRC Task Force is coming to an end, one of the final outputs was to produce a joint commitment statement from the five leadership organizations in the profession of occupational therapy in Canada. On September 30, 2023, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada, the OT TRC Task Force officially released the [Occupational Therapy Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#). The co-chairs further released an [Acknowledgement and Reflection on the OT TRC Task Force](#). The commitment statement draws primarily upon the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP), the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) of Canada Calls to Action](#), and the [Final Report on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) (MMIWG) and will work to continue to guide reconciliation efforts. This commitment statement lists specific activities, objectives, and outcomes that each organization will be responsible for within their respective spheres of control and influence.

As we advance the profession of occupational therapy, it has become clear that a plan to respond to and continue action towards Truth and Reconciliation is required. At present, the profession at large is more concerned with issues of social justice, racism, and responding to calls for Truth and Reconciliation than ever before. As mentioned previously, there has been the release of a new set of Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada (2021) that includes a focus on culture, equity, and justice, a new text *Promoting Occupational Participation: Collaborative Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy* that focuses on relationships and includes a justice and equity lens, and efforts to re-create the National Occupational Therapy Certification Exam (NOTCE). To take advantage of this new wave of commitment, determination and motivation, the OT TRC Task Force encourages the occupational therapy profession to be accountable to Truth and Reconciliation work via the commitment statement. However, it is noted that the commitments are only as good as the individuals acting and that it is up to all of us, as members of various organizations, and not just Indigenous Peoples or the most harmed populations, to collectively move forward in our efforts towards reconciliation.




## OT TRC TASK FORCE DASHBOARD: 2022-2023

The following dashboard provides a snapshot of progress on action items in 2022-2023. Please see Appendix 1 for previous years' dashboard.



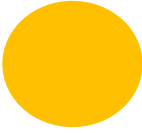
**Green = On track or completed**

**Yellow = Partially completed or changed approach**

**Red = Stopped or not made progress**


1.1 Relationships		
Action Item	2023 Status (Red, Green, Yellow)	Comments
1. Complete and publish the OT TRC Task Force Commitment Statement.		The Commitment Statement was released on September 30, 2023, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. The release was accompanied by a full Press Release and was shared via CAOT's media platforms. The statement was further uploaded to CAOT's Truth, Reconciliation, Indigenous Health, and Occupational Therapy webpage along with a co-chair's Acknowledgment and Reflection on the OT TRC Task Force.
2. Build meaningful relationships with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to advise on Task Force and/or CAOT activities and priorities.		Relationships were developed and strengthened with several Elders through a student-led Land Acknowledgement project. CAOT staff have continued efforts to connect with these Elders and recognize that this will be an ongoing relationship between Indigenous Elders and communities, and CAOT. In 2023, substantial progress was made in building relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers who understand occupational therapy. CAOT has continued to invite Elders to engage and participate in annual conference activities and events e.g., opening and closing ceremonies.
3. Support Indigenous OTs to provide feedback on OT TRC Taskforce activities and contribute to the development of		The Indigenous Advisory Group met in-person at the 2023 CAOT Conference in Saskatoon, SK. An Elder was invited to attend. The group received financial support and remuneration to attend the meeting. The meeting was




future Indigenous OT leaders.		Indigenous-led, and the members were provided the space to discuss meaningful topics and priorities without external influence.
<b>1.2 Mental Models</b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Status (Red, Green, Yellow)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Offer a CAOT sponsored KAIROS Blanket Exercise and a pre-conference workshop for occupational therapy leadership and delegates at the next face-to-face CAOT Conference.		A Blanket Exercise was completed at the 2023 CAOT Conference in Saskatoon, SK with both CAOT Board Members and conference delegates. Blanket Exercises will be offered at future conferences.
2. Propose a panel discussion with OTC leaders and other key partners to: a) build on the valuable dialogue that was initiated at CAOT's Vancouver Conference in 2018, b) to make explicit the actionable steps taken by each of the organizations to facilitate systems' change, and c) to discuss further actions to be taken individually or collectively.		<p>A Plenary Panel was completed at the 2023 CAOT Conference, "The imperative to dismantle white benevolence as we advance Truth and Reconciliation." Co-editors of the recent book "White Benevolence" and Sheelah Ivlev from Disrupt OT were invited as panel members. A summary of the event was published in the conference issue of OT Now (Sept/Oct 2023).</p> <p>Relationships with the co-editors were initiated after the panel with CAOT's CEO to discuss ongoing education opportunities on white supremacy and white benevolence within the occupational therapy profession.</p> <p>CAOT continues to be committed to providing space for sponsored sessions at the annual conference to support the sharing of updates and information related to TRC efforts and initiatives within the profession.</p>
3. Identify key student or student groups and/or CAOT intern(s)/student(s)		A fourth year Carleton University Health Sciences student supervised by CAOT completed a Field Placement research project

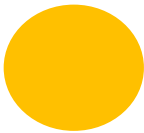
<p>to conduct two scoping literature reviews which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Best Practices in Reconciliation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Review of other professions' responses to TRC Calls to Action.</li> <li>ii. Collaboration with Indigenous organizations/communities</li> <li>iii. Addressing settler colonialism in OT models.</li> <li>iv. Identification of best practices in de-colonization in the education, research, and clinical practice arenas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p>related to areas of improvement and guidance for the creation of Land Acknowledgements. Outcomes included a full report and presentation that have been uploaded to CAOT's Truth, Reconciliation, Indigenous Health, and Occupational Therapy webpage. Additional resources related to Land Acknowledgments and Language Revitalization were made available on the webpage.</p> <p>The OT TRC Task Force has identified a need for historical research (potentially a student project) related to if/how the occupational therapy profession had a role in residential schools/day schools and the sixties scoop. It is also necessary to further explore the profession's known role in Indian Hospitals (also known as sanitoriums).</p>
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**1.3. Practices & Policies**

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Status (Red, Green, Yellow)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>1. Provide consultation on key CAOT initiatives as appropriate, such as Promoting Occupational Participation text, practice resources, CAOT Position Statements, role papers, and guidance documents.</p>		<p>The co-chairs and the OT TRC Task Force provided input and consultation on various CAOT activities including the <i>Toward Equity and Justice: Enacting an Intersectional Approach to Social Accountability in Occupational Therapy</i> (Joint Position Statement), the National Occupational Therapy Certification Exam (NOTCE), and further provided feedback on the process for Indigenous consultation and partnership in development of CAOT's Position Statements.</p> <p>Co-chairs and CAOT Board member Debra Beach Ducharme participated in the working</p>

		group for the NOTCE Exam Blueprint from March 2022-April 2023. Angie Phenix continues to be involved in NOTCE for upcoming item generation phase of revision of the NOTCE exam to align with the new Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada.
2. Advance action and progress towards equity for Indigenous children through Jordan's Principle and for Indigenous Peoples via Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB).		<p>The co-chairs and OT TRC Task Force provided feedback on the Jordan's Principle report led by McGill occupational therapy students and Hiba Zafran. The report will be used as an advocacy tool upon release.</p> <p>CAOT will continue to collaborate and seek input from Indigenous occupational therapists when completing advocacy efforts e.g., meeting with government decisions makers related to Jordan's Principle and NIHB. These efforts have been identified as a priority for CAOT and CAOT members for 2023-2024.</p>

#### 1.4 Power Dynamics

Action Item	Status (Red, Green, Yellow)	Comments
1. Strongly encourage OT TRC Task Force to continue to assume a leadership position within Canada to enact the recommendations of the TRC with respect to the profession of occupational therapy.		<p>The Task Force ended its initial 3-year mandate in September 2022 and continued work for an extended year to release the Commitment Statement. The Task Force laid a foundation focused on relationship building and connection within the occupational therapy profession.</p> <p>Ultimately, it is outside of the mandate of the Task Force co-chairs to dictate a relational framework to the various occupational therapy organizations. In the co-chair reflection attached to the OT TRC Task Force Commitment Statement, the co-chairs have provided a recommended relational structure</p>

		and mechanisms for transparency on actions via the annual CAOT Conference.
<p>2. Strongly encourage CAOT to develop a plan for increasing diversity within the profession, including within CAOT staff, Board of Directors, faculty positions and other leadership within the profession.</p>		<p>CAOT is attempting to make a concerted effort to increase diversity vis-a-vis its staff complement. The OT TRC Task Force will pursue CAOT to develop specific, measurable plans to track accountability in 2023 and beyond. CAOT has completed and released its Strategic Plan for 2023-2026, rooted in equity and justice that will support this action.</p> <p>It is recommended that ACOTUP, ACOTPA, and ACOTRO review their recruitment plans and make a concerted effort to include Indigenous staffers and share updates with the occupational therapy community.</p>
<p>3. It is recommended that the TRC Task Force be expanded to include representatives from OTC member organizations. Angie Phenix and Kaarina Valavaara continue as co-chairs and CAOT continues to serve as Secretariat.</p>		<p>In January 2022, the OT TRC Task Force discussed developing a public facing Commitment Statement that could be signed by OTC member organizations. In August/September 2023, all OTC member organizations signed the statement and indicated their commitments.</p> <p>Currently, the OT TRC Task Force is recommending co-creating accountability and governance structures that will outlast the initial 3-year mandate of the OT TRC Task Force and respect the unique mandate of each organization. We have recommended ongoing collaboration and accountability mechanisms via occupational therapy leadership organizations and annual CAOT conferences to keep commitments to reconciliation active and transparent and to support one another to make progress on the commitment statements. It will be up to the organizations to operationalize and assume ownership of an ongoing working relationships on reconciliation and justice for Indigenous Peoples within occupational therapy.</p>

## CO-CHAIR & SECRETARIAT REFLECTIONS

### Implementation Challenges

On the conclusion of the mandate from CAOT for the OT TRC Task Force, the co-chairs in collaboration with the CAOT Secretariat have reflected on the following challenges to implementation of the TRC Task Force Action Plan and envisioned outcomes of the Task Force. The intention of sharing these challenges is not to point blame at any individual or organization, rather to illuminate barriers that were encountered in implementing actions towards reconciliation. We invite the CAOT Board to reflect on how these barriers can be removed for ongoing reconciliation and equity work moving forward. We have themed the barriers in relation to the Water of System Change model that informed our work throughout our mandate.

### Policies and Practices

- At times, being in a contractor role, external to CAOT operations, presented challenges in communication e.g., being unsure of specific CAOT protocols and processes.
- Time that the co-chairs were able to commit to the work of reconciliation, as external contractors who completed this work on top of full-time work and family commitments, was one of the biggest barriers to supporting implementation of all components of the Action Plan. While it was a positive step to receive financial compensation for this work, this work needs to be embedded within the organization of CAOT.

### Relationships

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to meet in-person, the Task Force needed to spend additional time during the initial 3-year mandate building relationships. Additional time was required to build relationships due to the turnover of representation on the Task Force.

## Power Dynamics

- There is a need for change to be built into organizational structures and processes e.g., governance and bylaws, not just project-based work, and tasks. In other words, change processes must be embedded during the creation of operational plans.
- At times, collaboration as a group was challenging due to the diverse and specific mandates of each occupational therapy leadership organization.
- The current structure of occupational therapy in Canada at the leadership level is a barrier. At present, occupational therapists are not all members of one single organization and there is no accountability of each organization to one another. For example, this can present challenges as action cannot be taken with respect to recruitment without discussing the educational processes of occupational therapists.
- Occupational therapy is a small profession and as such, may not have as many available resources and power to influence change as compared to other professions.
- There is limited knowledge and data related to the number of Indigenous occupational therapists, occupational therapist assistants and students in Canada.
- To ensure sustainable action and progress towards Truth and Reconciliation, there is a need for financial and human resources. Completing this work as an “add on” or in a volunteer capacity is not sustainable and will not lead to overall positive change and outcomes.
- While providing resources for this work e.g., yearly budget, there is also a need for a permanent position within CAOT to continue to champion and advance this work.
- Truth and Reconciliation work must be integrated within all teams and departments at CAOT. For example, this work, while supported by the CAOT Advocacy team must also be the responsibility organization wide- it must be a collective undertaking.
- Due to a lack of knowledge and direction with respect to the next steps and/or first steps, broad change can lead to resistance.

## SUCSESSES & PROMISING NEXT STEPS

In addition to the implementation challenges, we want to also share facilitators to change and what we believe, in reflection, are promising next steps to continue the journey towards Truth and Reconciliation within the profession of occupational therapy. As above, we have themed facilitators in relation to the Water of System Change model that has informed our work.

### **Mental Models**

- While much education has occurred within CAOT (e.g., webinars, Blanket Exercise, conference presentations) and the profession regarding how colonization continues to impact occupation and occupational therapy, occupational therapists continue to ask for education related to how to practice in a culturally safer manner with Indigenous Peoples.
  - There is an opportunity with the co-occurring evolving structure of the Occupational Therapy and Indigenous Health Network (OTIHN), for CAOT to be innovative in collaborating and providing education to occupational therapists working with Indigenous Peoples. At conference sessions, for example, occupational therapists continue to ask for education on topics such as navigating Non-Insured Health Benefits and Jordan's Principle funding; deconstructing whiteness and white benevolence; culturally safer assessment practices; and culturally safer mental health practice.
- Relationship building with Elders and Knowledge Keepers through the Land Acknowledgement project acted as a starting point to build a network of trusted Indigenous Elders who can meaningfully advise and collaborate with the profession. This is an important next step as CAOT continues to pursue reconciliation and decolonization and will support CAOT's work to be informed meaningfully by Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

### **Policies and Practices**

- Resourcing is an important component of engaging in sustainable action. Providing financial resourcing to co-chairs (equivalent of 2 days/month for each co-chair) facilitated opportunities for the co-chairs to be

involved in CAOT activities beyond what would have been achievable at a volunteer level (e.g., presenting to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and engaging in other advocacy efforts; providing meaningful feedback on CAOT documents and Position Statements etc.). Moving forward, more sustainable, fulsome hours (at a part-time or full-time complement) embedded in the operational structure of CAOT (versus a contractor position) would support additional opportunities for CAOT to complete commitments and actions as outlined by the OT TRC Task Force Commitment Statement.

## **Relationships**

- The opportunity to present annually at CAOT Conferences, with dedicated time on the agenda and OT Now articles that followed, allowed us the opportunity to maintain a level of transparency and accountability to conference delegates and CAOT members. We received input from conference delegates that meaningfully informed our action plans each year. We strongly recommend that these conferences continue to be considered as a venue to inform occupational therapists on progress and challenges towards Truth and Reconciliation efforts.
- The opportunity to present at the 2022 WFOT Congress in Paris provided the opportunity to network with Indigenous and non-Indigenous occupational therapists globally. We were able to demonstrate the innovative, transformative leadership of the OT TRC Task Force in Canada.
- Relationship building and early CAOT support for the emerging Indigenous Advisory Group by way of the OT TRC Task Force budget, allowed for a 1-day meeting at the 2023 CAOT Conference in Saskatoon, SK. This meeting presented an opportunity for Indigenous occupational therapists to connect, reflect, participate in traditional occupations with an Elder and provide feedback to the co-chairs on their leadership of the OT TRC Task Force. The Indigenous Advisory Group will be self-governing; however, building working relationships between CAOT and this emerging group will be important to ensure the needs of Indigenous OTs, OTAs and students are understood by CAOT and to collaborate on relevant advocacy projects to improve occupational therapy practice with Indigenous Peoples.



- CAOT leadership, in collaboration with co-chairs, are in the early stages of building relationships with Indigenous health leaders such as those from medicine and pharmacy. This has promising potential to learn from one another on supporting the recruitment and retention of Indigenous health professionals and to leverage relationships for more effective advocacy at a federal level on shared concerns such as equity in funding for health services.

### **Power Dynamics**

- Throughout the mandate of the OT TRC Task Force, the co-chairs were able to engage in and support the advocacy priorities of CAOT. For example, the co-chairs were able to attend meetings with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and provide consultation services on a variety of projects and initiatives such as the Primary Care Team project.
- The co-chairs were supported to attend and present at the 2022 WFOT Congress in Paris and received feedback from international occupational therapists that Canada was advanced in terms of the creation and development of a Task Force dedicated to advancing Truth and Reconciliation within the profession of occupational therapy.
- Ongoing interest and involvement of ACOTUP, ACOTRO, COTF & ACOTPA by way of attendance on a Task Force and contributions to the Commitment Statement led to an ongoing collective response to the Calls to Action of the TRC and it is recommended that this relationship continues through leadership organizations to improve sustainability of progress to commitment statement actions and reconciliation within the profession of occupational therapy across Canada.

## CONCLUSION

As we conclude our term as co-chairs of the OT TRC Task Force, we are proud to leave the OT TRC Task Force Commitment Statement as a medium for continued, creative collaboration and support among the signatory organizations. We recommend annual review and updating of this document through Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC) meetings and as a consideration of transparency and accountability to occupational therapists, occupational therapist assistants, and Indigenous Peoples by collectively sharing updates at the annual CAOT Conference. It will be up to each of the leadership organizations to decide on a collective way forward that respects each other's unique mandate and considers the shared responsibility towards truth, reconciliation, and justice for Indigenous Peoples.

We thank the CAOT Board and CAOT staff for their leadership in starting and funding this work for the past four years. We also thank the CAOT secretariat, past and present, for their mentorship and support. The outputs of the OT TRC Task Force would not have been possible without resources and expertise.

We hope that, as what was shared at the 2023 CAOT Conference Town Hall in Saskatoon, SK that the formal end to funding the OT TRC Task Force signals an evolution of CAOT's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and the creation of a more sustainable, embedded approach to continuing this journey.

There is still much work to do within the occupational therapy profession and education required about the ongoing impacts of colonialism, including residential schools, on the occupational possibilities and health outcomes of Indigenous Peoples.

**Miigwetch.**

## Appendix 1



### OT TRC TASK FORCE DASHBOARD 2021-2022


The following dashboard provides a snapshot of progress on action items in 2021-2022.

**Green = On track or completed**


**Yellow = Partially completed or changed approach**


**Red = Stopped or not made progress**


1.1 Relationships		
Action Item	2022 Status (Red, Green, Yellow)	Comments
1. Identify and recruit Indigenous Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, and Communities to guide aspects of CAOT's decolonizing work.		<p>Elders were engaged at the 2022 CAOT Conference and will continue to be part of TRC Task Force events and CAOT conferences going forward.</p> <p>The Co-Chairs continue to meet with the Indigenous Advisory Council (a group of Indigenous OTs) outside of the OT TRC Task Force meetings and look forward to learning from Indigenous communities in 2022-23 on how to better support and mentor diverse Indigenous OTs in clinical practice, academics, and leadership.</p>
2. Propose a panel discussion with OTC leaders and other key stakeholders to: a) build on the valuable dialogue that was initiated at CAOT's Vancouver Conference in 2018, b) to make explicit the actionable steps taken by each of the organizations to facilitate systems' change, and c) to discuss further actions to be taken individually or collectively.		<p>The OT TRC Task Force and representatives from the OTC member organizations have continued to co-create a Commitment Statement that will outline the actionable steps that are currently in progress or will be taken to facilitate system change. The statement is currently in draft form and is expected to be completed by the end of 2022 once approved by all partner boards.</p> <p>The OT TRC Task Force was invited to develop an unopposed Plenary Panel session for the 2023 CAOT conference that will focus on the current</p>


		state of reconciliation within the profession of occupational therapy in Canada.
3. Create standing seats on the OT TRC Task Force for one representative from each member organization affiliated with Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC) to ensure that the work of the Task Force is shared amongst and across all levels of the profession, and to ensure the desired systemic impact.		<p>The OT TRC Task Force continues to have memberships of representatives from each member organization affiliated with OTC. Throughout 2021-2022, the Task Force welcomed Mary Evert (COTF), Marianne Baird (ACOTRO), Mary Forhan (ACOTUP), and Debra Beach-Ducharme (Indigenous CAOT Board Member).</p> <p>The Task Force ended its initial 3-year mandate in September 2022 and laid a foundation focused on relationship building and connection within the OT profession. Moving forward, the Task Force will continue to discuss collective needs, priorities, and determine accountability mechanisms, and focus on community consultation.</p>

## 1.2 Mental Models

Action Item	Status (Red, Green, Yellow)	Comments
1. Offer a CAOT sponsored KAIROS Blanket Exercise and a pre-conference workshop for occupational therapy leadership and delegates at the next face-to-face CAOT Conference. The proposed workshop is called "Examining privilege and oppression in the context of reconciliation and Indigenous rights: directions for occupational therapists and other rehabilitation providers". This workshop will support occupational therapists to		<p>Blanket Exercise is expected to be rescheduled to the 2023 CAOT Conference in Saskatoon, SK.</p> <p>At the 2022 Hybrid CAOT Conference in Whistler, BC, the OT TRC Task Force facilitated a 1-hour sponsored session with conference delegates to engage in knowledge exchange. High level themes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The need for ongoing education and (un)learning for occupational therapists e.g., learning opportunities should be targeted, with suggested topics including trauma informed practice and</li> </ul>

<p>reflect on their positionality and role in reconciliation and rights promotion related to occupational therapy education, practice, and research.</p>		<p>building relationships with Indigenous leaders and organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The need to build sustainable partnerships e.g., prioritize relationship building and collaboration with Indigenous organizations, communities, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers</li> <li>-The need for increased mentoring and support for Indigenous students</li> </ul> <p>At the conference, members of the OT TRC Task Force attended a full-day strategic planning session to review commitments and meaningfully and tangibly make progress on the TRC Calls to Action &amp; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls to Justice. During this strategic planning session, all occupational therapy organizations provided concrete goals and commitments that will be presented to Indigenous Elders and Boards of OT TRC Task Force member organizations for approval, following which will be shared publicly with occupational therapists.</p>
<p>2. Ensure the inclusion and participation of Elders and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge Keepers and respect the perspective, education and ceremony they bring to each annual conference and other CAOT sponsored events.</p>		<p>At the OT TRC Task Force full-day planning meeting, Elder Albert McLeod attended virtually to provide opening remarks and facilitated a closing circle.</p> <p>Elders and Knowledge Keepers will continue to be part of TRC Task Force events and CAOT conferences going forward, including the 2023 CAOT conference in Saskatoon, SK.</p> <p>Co-Chairs continue to review the TRC Calls to Action and MMIWG Calls to Justice and OT TRC Task Force agreed to informally include these Calls within the work of the OT TRC Task Force e.g., in the co-creation of the upcoming Commitment Statement.</p>

<p>3. Identify key student or student groups and/or CAOT intern(s)/student(s) to conduct two scoping literature reviews which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Best Practices in Reconciliation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Review of other professions' responses to TRC Calls to Action.</li> <li>ii. Collaboration with Indigenous organizations/communities</li> <li>iii. Addressing settler colonialism in OT models.</li> <li>iv. Identification of best practices in de-colonization in the education, research, and clinical practice arenas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p><b>3.i.</b> Spring 2022 - 4<sup>th</sup> year Health Sciences CAOT placement student completed a project focused on analyzing the reconciliation journeys of the following associations: the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association, the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, and Speech-Language and Audiology Canada. The purpose of the analysis was for CAOT to learn from the reconciliation journeys of other associations and benefit from best practices to advance decolonization, and reconciliation in the profession of occupational therapy. The project resulted in several recommendations for CAOT including the need to collect or access data on the number of Indigenous OTs and OTAs in Canada, review and revise foundational documents e.g., Code of Ethics to ensure they align and are guided by TRC principles, and include financial compensation for Indigenous consultants e.g., Elders and Knowledge Keepers within yearly budgets.</p> <p><b>3.ii.</b> Collaboration with Indigenous organizations/communities is the main focus/priority of the 2022-2023 work plan.</p> <p><b>3.ii.</b> In the spirit of making meaningful and authentic partnerships, OTC members collectively developed a Commitment Statement that outlines actionable steps that are in progress or will need to be taken to work towards systems' change. The statement will be completed by the end of 2022 and will inform connecting with Indigenous organizations/communities through 2022-2023.</p> <p><b>3.iii.</b> OT TRC Task Force members were involved (at significant levels) in the development of the</p>
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		<p>new practice framework in the sequel to Enabling Occupation – “Promoting Occupational Participation: Collaborative Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy” at the authorship level and as members of the Advisory Panel.</p> <p><b>3.iv.</b> September 2022 - April 2023 - CAOT is supervising a 4th year Health Sciences student from Carleton University that is focusing on a project related to the importance and meaning of land acknowledgements. Outcomes will include resources that can guide the creation of land acknowledgements for CAOT and OTC organizations and a presentation to both the OT TRC Task Force and the OT and Indigenous Health Network.</p>
<p>4. Continue OT TRC Task Force on-going commitment and work to decolonization.</p>		<p>OT TRC Task Force continues to acknowledge land (recognizing the traditional territory of Indigenous Peoples) at all formal face to face and virtual meetings, webinars, conferences, Board meetings.</p> <p>January to March 2022 – CAOT and OT TRC Task Force co-chairs met with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to focus on the development of partnerships to support the expansion of OT services within ISC’s programs, including the role of OT in mental health, primary care, and aging in place. The meetings further focused on discussions related to the barriers/challenges associated with accessing Jordan’s Principle funding across Canada. ISC’s team is interested in having Angie and Kaarina present to their senior management team on the role of OTs in mental health, primary care, and aging in place/LTC.</p> <p>In April 2022, the OT TRC Task Force provided input on the draft Equity and Justice Joint</p>

Position Statement. It was highlighted that the draft needs to acknowledge and make explicit the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples.


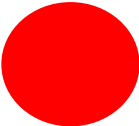
McGill University student occupational therapists under the tutelage of Dr. Hiba Zafran, PhD., Assistant Professor are researching barriers to accessing Jordan's Principle funding across all provinces and territories in Canada. The conclusions and recommendations of this research will be available Fall 2022 and will support the OT TRC Task Force in proposing solutions to ISC. The report will further be used as a tool to advocate for specific changes that OTs have raised when attempting to provide services.

The OT TRC Task Force was invited to develop an unopposed Plenary Panel session for the 2023 CAOT conference that will focus on the current state of reconciliation within the profession of occupational therapy in Canada.

CAOT continues to support expansion of Occupational Therapy & Indigenous Health Network which now has a pediatric subgroup and an adult assessment subgroup for targeted advocacy and education in these areas. Student occupational therapists from the University of British Columbia under the supervision of Tal Jarus, PhD are completing a mixed methods research project focusing on the use of assessments completed by occupational therapists with Indigenous Peoples.



The Co-Chairs presented "*Leading a path toward reconciliation between occupational therapy and Indigenous Peoples in Canada: A National Occupational Therapy Truth and Reconciliation*


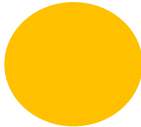
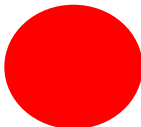




		<p><i>Taskforce</i>” on behalf of the Task Force at the WFOT Congress 2022. The presentation focused on sharing progress on TRC work in Canada and lessons learned, and highlighted the importance of collaborative leadership, partnerships, and Indigenous led work. The presentation was well received by Canadian and international delegates and highlighted the importance of commitment to action needed to advance equity and reconciliation.</p> <p>Following the presentation at WFOT and in discussion with members of the Task Force, it was determined that advocacy efforts targeting reconciliation work on an international level (e.g., via WFOT) is beneficial. This discussion item will be reflected in the 2022-2023 work plan.</p>
<p>5. Engaging and respecting Indigenous knowledge (knowledge recovery; privileging Indigenous knowledge).</p>		<p>CAOT continues to engage Elders and Knowledge Keepers at conferences and on OTC Reflections days. The OT TRC Task Force members will continue to provide guidance and support to CAOT to involve and engage Elders and Knowledge Keepers at opening and closing ceremonies and other events.</p> <p>November 2021 - Dalhousie's School of Occupational Therapy hosted the 18th Kelly Bang Lectureship ~ "Advocacy as Community - Reflections and Lessons Learned as an Indigenous Occupational Therapist " with Kelly Bang lecturer Kaarina Valavaara.</p>
<p>6. Retention and recruitment of Indigenous scholars.</p>		<p>Unfortunately, there was no progress on this action item in 2022. It is hoped with formal partnerships with ACOTUP and COTF we can make progress on advocating for the recruitment and support for Indigenous scholars. This action</p>

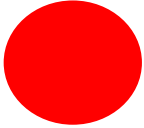
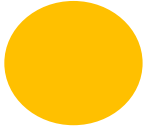


		<p>item will further inform key questions that will be asked during community consultations.</p> <p>In January 2022, the OT TRC Task Force welcomed Debra Beach Ducharme, Director of Indigenous Health Integration at University of Manitoba.</p>
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### 1.3. Practices & Policies

Action Item	Status (Red, Green, Yellow)	Comments
<p>1. Consult, identify, support and advocate for ongoing inclusion of core competencies for culturally safe and responsive occupational therapy practice with Indigenous people and communities that will inform the development of the CORECOM document.</p>		<p>OT TRC Task Force members were involved (at significant levels) in the development of the new practice framework in the sequel to Enabling Occupation - “Promoting Occupational Participation: Collaborative Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy” at the authorship level and as members of the Advisory Panel. Angie Phenix was involved in advising and ensuring that Indigenous rights and cultural safety was appropriately and adequately included in e-learning modules that accompanied the launch in 2022.</p> <p>While the new core competencies state the need for the creation of culturally safer relationships and anti-racist ethical spaces, Co-Chairs feel that this is an ongoing learning journey. Angie Phenix will continue to be involved in supporting the education e.g., learning modules that will accompany the implementation of the new core competencies document.</p>
<p>2. Contribute to the development of practice frameworks for occupational therapy that include Indigenous perspectives.</p>		<p>TRC Task Force members were involved (at significant levels) in the development of the new practice framework in Promoting Occupational Participation: Collaborative Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy the upcoming sequel to</p>

		Enabling Occupation at the authorship level and as members of the Advisory Panel. The new practice framework is collaboratively authored with Indigenous and settler voices.
3. Provide consultation on key CAOT initiatives as appropriate, such as Enabling Occupation text revision, practice resources, position statements, role papers, guidance documents.		<p>The OT TRC Task Force has had significant and ongoing involvement in the creation of the Promoting Occupational Participation: Collaborative Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy text.</p> <p>OT TRC Task Force members were involved at the editor and author levels as well as participated as Advisory Panel members.</p> <p>OT TRC Task Force members also attended public engagement events on the development of the model and practice process framework.</p>
4. Provide consultation on key CAOT initiatives as appropriate, such as contribute to the Government of Canada's co-development of Indigenous health legislation and distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy.		Contribution to Indigenous legislation could not move forward due to delays in the promulgation of policies at the Federal level. Planned deliverables from CAOT/OTC include written briefs or engagement in consultations. TRC Task Force will be involved in the forthcoming (2023) consultations on pan-Canadian mental health strategies.
5. Contribute to United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) legislation - will seek opportunities to submit briefs to the Action Plan.		No progress made on this item in 2022 based on Government of Canada's timetable for an Action Plan pursuant to the legislation. Planned deliverables from CAOT/OTC include written briefs or engagement in consultations.
6. Contribute to the development of resources grounded in cultural safety and humility.		Significant progress was made on this item in 2022. Feedback from TRC Conference Session included ongoing education and (un)learning, partnerships, the need for mentoring and support for Indigenous students, and additional policy and practice challenges. Further, there is a need to continue to support clinicians and

		<p>educators by providing professional development opportunities and resources to promote culturally safe practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Indigenous Health page on CAOT website continues to be updated with resources and updates from the Task Force.</li> <li>• The Co-Chairs see the need for creating Indigenous led, trauma-informed modules for CAOT members- but limited time in 2022 precluded completion. It is hoped that with increased resourcing that this action item will be completed in 2023.</li> <li>• Co-Chairs are planning a Plenary Panel session at the 2023 CAOT conference that will focus on the current state of reconciliation in the profession of occupational therapy in Canada.</li> </ul>
<p>7. CAOT/OTC to discuss adding a data element regarding Indigenous status of members.</p>		<p>CIHI is working towards developing a Minimum Data Set (MDS) for the health professions that submit to CIHI, including reporting on Race-Based and Indigenous Identity data. See report:</p> <p><a href="https://www.cihi.ca/en/guidance-on-the-use-of-standards-for-race-based-and-indigenous-identity-data-collection-and-health-reporting-in-canada">Guidance on the Use of Standards for Race-Based and Indigenous Identity Data Collection and Health Reporting in Canada (cihi.ca)</a></p> <p>This change/proposal for the MDS was introduced to the data providers (the OT regulators, and CAOT for the territories) by CIHI in 2021 and will be a key topic of conversation at future CIHI provider meetings.</p>
<p><b>1.4 Power Dynamics</b></p>		
<p><b>Action Item</b></p>	<p><b>Status (Red, Green, Yellow)</b></p>	<p><b>Comments</b></p>

<p>8. Build on the existing CAOT mentorship program to provide Indigenous occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants with mentors to foster Indigenous occupational therapy leadership.</p>		<p>After consultation with Indigenous occupational therapists, this has moved outside the scope of OT TRC Task Force into an Indigenous led, self-determined space. (Please refer to item 1).</p>
<p>9. Strongly encourage OTC to take a position on proactive recruitment of Indigenous students and encourage university OT programs to increase enrollment of Indigenous students in OT programs.</p>		<p>There was limited progress on this specific action item in 2022; however, with the foundational relationship with ACOTUP &amp; COTF and their presence on OT TRC Task Force and with the upcoming completion of the Commitment Statement – it is envisaged that deliverables for 2022-2023 would involve conversations and plans for scholarships/financial support for Indigenous students with specific, measurable goals re: recruitment.</p>
<p>10. Strongly encourage CAOT to develop a plan for increasing diversity within the profession, including within CAOT staff, Board of Directors, faculty positions and other leadership within the profession.</p>		<p>CAOT is attempting to make a concerted effort to increase diversity vis-a-vis its staff complement. OT TRC Task Force will pursue CAOT to develop specific, measurable plans to track accountability in 2023. CAOT is currently in the process of completing its Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, that is rooted in equity and justice.</p> <p>It is recommended that ACOTUP, ACOTPA and ACOTRO review their recruitment plans and make a concerted effort to include Indigenous staffers and share updates with the Task Force.</p>
<p>11. Strongly encourage OT TRC Task Force to continue to assume a leadership position within Canada to enact the recommendations of the TRC with respect to the profession of occupational therapy.</p>		<p>Task Force members hosted several sessions at the CAOT Hybrid 2022 conference, including “Occupational Therapy Truth and Reconciliation Taskforce: Invitation for Community Feedback”. Feedback from this session is incorporated into the action plan for 2022-2023.</p>

		The OT TRC Task Force published an OT Now Article in September 2022 outlining a summary of this session and soliciting further feedback via email.
<b>1.4 Power Dynamics</b>		
<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Status (Red, Green, Yellow)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
12. That the OT TRC Task Force be expanded to include representatives from OTC member organizations. Angie Phenix and Kaarina Valavaara continue as Co-Chairs and CAOT continues to serve as Secretariat.		<p>In January 2022, the OT TRC Task Force discussed developing a public facing Commitment Statement that could be signed by OTC member organizations. All OTC member organizations (except COTF) have indicated their commitments. We are following up with COTF's re its commitments.</p> <p>Currently the OT TRC Task Force, including OTC partners are co-creating accountability and governance structures that will outlast the initial 3-year mandate of the OT Task Force and respect the unique mandate of each organization.</p>