



Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists Code of Ethics

Preamble

Occupational therapy is a health profession concerned with promoting health and quality of life through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists work collaboratively with people of all ages and abilities who experience challenges or obstacles to participation. These obstacles may be caused from an impairment of body structure, a change in function, or from barriers in the social and physical environment (Adapted from the World Health Organization).

Occupational therapy in Canada is evidence-based as it focuses on client-centered enablement of occupation, based on client information and critical review of relevant research, expert consensus and past experience (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists et al., 2009).

CAOT is a voluntary professional association for occupational therapists in Canada with a mission to advance excellence in occupational therapy. It is the vision of CAOT that all people in Canada will value and have access to occupational therapy.

Occupational therapy is based on a set of values that are concerned with occupation and how occupation affects and is affected by the person and the environment in which the person lives. Occupational therapists believe health is more than the absence of disease and is strongly influenced by having choice and control in everyday occupations. Occupational therapy is client-centered (CAOT, 2002).

Code of Ethics

CAOT members are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics, bylaws and policies of the Association. In the case that a CAOT member's or associate's practice is governed by a regulatory organization, the regulatory organization's Code of Ethics will supersede this one. The goal of the CAOT Code of Ethics is to achieve and maintain high standards of professional integrity toward clients, colleagues, partners, stakeholders, the public and CAOT. The Code describes expected conduct of all CAOT members in occupational therapy practice, including those involved in direct service to clients, management, administration, education, research and/or business. Any action that is in violation of the intention and purpose of the Code of Ethics is considered unethical.

Expectations of members regarding occupational therapy:

CAOT expects its members to:

- practice with integrity, accountability, transparency, and respect for others;
- acknowledge diversity and uphold the principle of equity;
- use professional communication with clients, colleagues, partners and stakeholders;
- value and respect clients' rights to be self-directed in their decision-making in accordance with their own needs, values and available resources;

- value and respect clients' rights to be treated with respect and dignity within a safe and non-judgmental environment;
- ensure confidentiality and privacy of personal information;
- recognize and manage issues related to conflict of interest;
- maintain a standard of professional competency to provide high quality service;
- abide by legislative requirements and codes of ethics established by provincial occupational therapy regulatory organizations (as applicable) and other organizations to which the member has obligations (e.g. employer, facility);
- contribute to interdisciplinary collaboration and development of partnerships to advance the occupational performance of the population served;
- understand and manage ethical implications involved in all practice domains, including research;
- participate in continuing professional development throughout their career and apply new knowledge and skills to their professional work which is based on best available evidence;
- promote the profession to the public, other professional organizations and government at regional, provincial and federal levels; and
- contribute to the development and/or dissemination of professional knowledge.

Expectations of members regarding CAOT and the profession:

CAOT expects its members to:

- use the Canadian Framework for Ethical Occupational Therapy Practice (CAOT, 2006) to reflect upon and develop their practice;
- draw upon the Profile of Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada (CAOT, 2012) to identify the competencies necessary to achieve and promote excellence in occupational therapy;
- uphold the integrity and by-laws of CAOT (CAOT, 2016) when interacting within or on the behalf of the Association; and
- support CAOT initiatives.

For questions or comments please contact the CAOT National Office at 1-800-434-2268.

References

- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2016). Objects and Bylaws, Ottawa: Author.
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2002). Enabling Occupation: An Occupational Therapy Perspective, Revised Edition, Ottawa: Author.
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2012). Profile of Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada. Retrieved from www.caot.ca on December 10, 2017.
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2006). Canadian Framework for Ethical Occupational Therapy Practice. Retrieved from www.caot.ca (member section) on April 3, 2018.
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists et al. (2009), Joint Position Statement on Evidence-based Occupational Therapy. Retrieved on April 3, 2018 from <http://www.caot.ca/default.asp?pageid=156>.
- World Federation of Occupational Therapists. www.who.int

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