



CAOT Webinar

Webinar 2:

Collaborative Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy

An introduction

Gayle Restall & Mary Egan



PROMOTING OCCUPATIONAL PARTICIPATION:  
COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Dr. Gayle Restall & Mary Egan



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Promoting occupational participation: Collaborative relationship-focused occupational therapy

Co-Editors



Dr. Mary Egan

Dr. Gayle Restall



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1. Model	Canadian Model of Occupational Participation (CanMOP)	How we think about occupation
2. Approach	Collaborative relationship-focused occupational therapy	How we approach service provision
3. Framework	Canadian Occupational Therapy Inter-relational Practice Process (COTIPP)	Foundational processes and actions for promoting occupational participation
4. Integrating the model, approach, and framework in practice		



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## Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with a relationship-focused approach to occupational therapy
- Describe the key characteristics of relationship-focused occupational therapy
- Reflect on practice implications of using a collaborative relationship-focused approach

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"An approach to occupational therapy that attends to, and concentrates on, the relational aspects of the therapist self and the individuals and collectives (that is, families, groups, communities, and populations) who use occupational therapy services. These relationships are embedded within the multi-layered historical and contemporary contexts in which people live and occupational therapy occurs" (Restall & Egan, 2022, p. 100).

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## What about client-centred practice?



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Descriptors of client-centred practice

- Respect
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Trust
- Listening & communicating
- Recognizing strengths
- Attention to power structures

(Law et al., 1995; Sumsion, 2000; Sumsion & Law, 2006; Townsend et al., 1990)

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1. Historical context
2. Dominant worldview
3. Individualism versus collectivity
4. Structural influences

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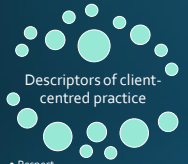
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- Historical context
- Dominant worldviews
- Collectivity
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Collaborative relationships  
between occupational therapist  
and client

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Contextually relevant

- The therapist is recognized as an integral part of the relational context of therapy
  - Social positionality; values and beliefs; explicit and implicit biases
- Micro, meso, and macro influences on therapists, their practice environments, and the individuals and collectives they work with are explored and considered
  - This includes consideration of the ways that stigmas, ableism, racism, and additional forms of oppression are enacted in systemic, intrapersonal, interpersonal and epistemic practices and structures



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Nuanced

- Relationships are nuanced contextually and temporally
- Therapist's responsibility to understand what is needed in the context and over time to build and sustain therapy relationships



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Strives for safety

- Physical, emotional, cultural, and spiritual dimensions
- Requires therapists' lifelong commitment to:
  - Ensuring currency in critical thinking and the technical aspects of their areas of practice
  - Being humble, respectful, and open to cultural practices, spiritual beliefs, and ways of being that are different than their own or those of the dominant society
  - Recognizing the impacts of multiple forms of trauma and practicing in ways that mitigate and do not perpetuate individual or collective harms and traumas



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Promotes rights-based self-determination

- Acknowledges people's entitlement to make decisions that affect their lives and communities
- Obligations for therapists to:
  - Respect the rights, strengths, and resources of individuals and communities for self-determination
  - Demonstrate of acceptance of various worldviews
  - Create opportunities for collaboration that are responsive to various individuals and collectives



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Judith

Building and sustaining relationships requires critical reflection on the therapist self and micro, meso, and macro contexts



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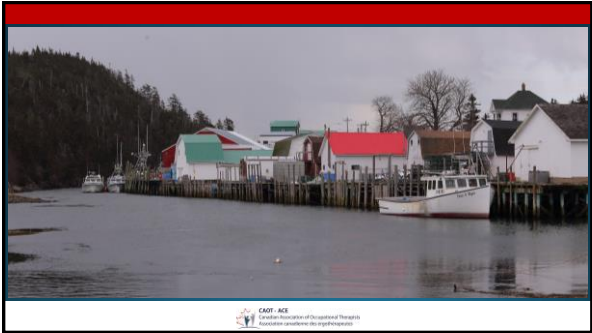
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- Continually increase understanding of their own positionality, what they bring to the relationship, and how their social positionality impacts their relationships with the people they work with
- Gain knowledge and skills in understanding how personal, organizational, social, political, and historical contexts influence themselves, the people they work with, and therapy relationships
- Adjust their approaches in response to a variety of contexts and changes in people and contexts over time
- View relationships through a critically reflective lens that promotes people's rights-based self-determination



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- A collaborative relationship-focused approach is essential to quality and effective occupational therapy practice
- The approach builds on traditional descriptors of client-centred practice to take into account contemporary knowledge and understanding
- The approach requires therapists to build and sustain relationships with these characteristics:
  - Contextually relevant
  - Nuanced
  - Strive for safety
  - Promote rights-based self-determination



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Slide 14: Photos by CDC on Unsplash; with pseudonyms  
Slide 15: Photo from Unsplash



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Promoting Occupational Participation: Relationship-Focused Occupational Therapy

Advisory Panel Members

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• Laura Yvonne Bulk

• Katie Lee Bunting

• Keri Chambers

• Heidi Cramm

• Maryse Dionne

• Niki Kiepek

• Alexandra Lecours

• Janna MacLachlan

• Lilian Magalhaes

• Annette McKinnon

• Carol McKinstry

• Angie Phenix

• Cybele Sack

• Barry Trentham

• Kaarina Valavaara

• Brenda Vrkljan

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Contextually relevant

Nuanced

Strives for safety

Promotes rights-based self-determination

Collaborative relationship-focused occupational therapy

Collaborative relationship-focused occupational therapy

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