LEADERSHIP in MENTAL HEALTH OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

An Online Compendium
Introduction to the Compendium

This collection of papers reflects the optimism and positive social change potential of occupational therapy students and practitioners. In many different spheres, occupational therapists are making significant differences in the lives of their clients and other people they work with. I asked students to use the LEADS Framework developed by Leaders for Live1 to explore an intriguing aspect of mental health occupational therapy practice. And explore they did! They talked to OT leaders in diverse settings, they created innovative program ideas, and they shared their own personal reflections on leadership in different contexts.

We know that you will enjoy this inspiring collection of stories, conversations, and reflections. Whether you are an occupational therapist, student OT, or a friend of OT, we hope that they will spark some ideas for your own life, and perhaps even for looking for an occupational therapist that you or your organization could work with to create great changes.

We are excited about sharing this resource with you and recognize that these are only a few of the many amazing stories and people who are involved in this work – but they are wonderful examples of the many contributions that OTs make to our society. The collection was written by students, and was not professionally edited – what you see here are their thoughts and reflections, in their own words, as they were reaching the end of their OT program.

Our gratitude to all of the students in the 2011 University of Toronto Masters in Occupational Therapy class, and the many people who graciously shared their perspectives. We especially thank Janine Farragher and Julia Foster for assisting with putting this final collection together.

Please contact us if you have comments or if you would like to let us know how this compendium has touched you.

Lynn Cockburn and Carrie Clark

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Student Introduction

Often in our student academic careers, when we are asked to write a paper, we are doing so primarily to demonstrate our knowledge and problem-solving skills. It is a rarity to have been asked to compose a student paper which may actually have a direct impact beyond the four walls of our school. This compendium has afforded us the opportunity to reflect deeply on the concept of leadership as it applies to our future careers; to learn from and share the experiences of experts and innovators within our profession; and to have a broader impact on our community, taking us out of the role of student writer and placing us in the role of change agent. As future occupational therapists, we are grateful for the lessons we have learned from engaging in this process, and excited to share our findings with you.

We would like to thank Lynn Cockburn and Carrie Clark for their vision in spearheading this project; the many knowledgeable and insightful informants who were involved in co-creating these papers with us; and our fellow classmates, for exploring and describing such a wide range of topics with so much creativity and passion.

We hope that the information and resources found within these papers are a source of inspiration to expand our roles as healthcare leaders, in the field of mental health and beyond.

Janine Farragher and Julia Foster