

# Global Perspectives: Occupational Therapy Practitioners & Students with Disabilities

Network of OT Practitioners with Disabilities & Supporters 20 Years of Data & 3 University Studies from the US & UK



## Legislation

- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (USA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (USA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act 2008 (USA)
- The Equality Act of 2010 (UK)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Global by those ratifying)

Majority Aware of Laws  
Majority Feel Laws Not Enforced  
Majority Feel Still Barrier to Education & Employment

**ACCOMMODATIONS = SUCCESS  
ATTITUDES ARE EVERYTHING**

## NOTPD DATA

Over 3,000 Members from 9 Countries  
20+ Years of Data  
Average 207 requests per year

Majority of requests periods of admissions, fieldwork, initial employment



### Top Faculty & Clinical Educator Requests

- #1 Cognitive & Behavioral Disabilities
- #2 Vision
- #3 Mobility

### Top Student Requests

- #1 Mobility
- #2 Cognitive & Behavioral Disabilities
- #3 Chronic Health Conditions

### Top Employer Requests

- #1 Mobility
- #2 Chronic Health Conditions
- #3 Cognitive & Behavioral Disabilities

### Top Barrier Perception of Educators

- #1 Feel Need to Have Disclosure
- #2 System
- #3 Costs

### Top Barrier Perception of Students

- #1 Attitudes
- #2 Forced to Disclose
- #3 System

### Top Barrier Perception of Employers

- 1 Feel Need to Have Disclosure
- #2 Costs
- #3 Attitudes of Colleagues

## Occupational Therapists' Views of Colleagues with Seen & Unseen Disabilities

### BACKGROUND

- Workplace discrimination and negative or unsupportive attitudes of colleagues continue to be barriers for OTs with disabilities. However, the views of employers and employees towards colleagues with disabilities had received little research. Consequently this UK study aimed to explore this gap in the literature.

### FINDINGS

- Majority felt it depends on disability if should disclose or not
- Majority felt should not be obliged to disclose to coworkers
- Reasons for nondisclosure are fear, stigma, discrimination, treated different, Judgement, exclusion, prejudice
- Majority feel OTs with disabilities brings benefits & issues

Negative language of disclosure implies consequences, lack of policies and knowledge of supports create barriers, ongoing discussions needed.

## Promoting a Diverse Workforce Through the Inclusion of OT Practitioners with Disabilities

### OBJECTIVES

- Identify Barriers to Practice
- Identify Strengths OTs with Disabilities Bring
- Discuss How OTs with Disabilities Promote a Diverse Workforce

### RESULTS

- OTs with disabilities face barriers to inclusion
  - Attitudinal
  - Environmental
  - Organizational
- OTs with disabilities have unique strengths and insights to contribute
  - Therapeutic use of self & empathy
  - Managing power differentials
  - Advocacy
  - Problem solving
  - Personal experience
  - Technical skills
  - Bridging cultural divides
  - Creativity

- Formal & Informal supports exists to support inclusion

OTs have the skills to support students & peers yet do not always do this for OTs with disabilities

## The Experience of Occupational Therapy Practitioners with Disabilities & Students: A Mixed-Methods Pilot Study

### PURPOSE

- Conducted to provide insight into the experiences of OT practitioners & students.
- To analyse effect of ADA & ADAAA on access to reasonable accommodations
- Researchers predicted that despite OT being a profession that advocates for individuals with disabilities, accommodations are applied inconsistently for practitioners with disabilities in the OT field.

### RESULTS

- As average difficulty for obtaining accommodations increased the hours worked per week decreased
- Average for issues with accommodations decreased for those graduating after ADA and again after ADAAA.
- All category groups identified barriers to accommodations

Barriers remain in education, fieldwork & employment. Reasonable accommodations correlate to fulltime employment.



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