



Supporting your Practice Excellence

Planning for your Professional Development

Occupational therapists plan for, and engage in, activities that develop their clinical and professional skills and competencies throughout their career. Professional development is an investment in oneself that is so worthwhile!

While formal courses, workshops, webinars, conferences, and other organized educational events may come first to mind as professional development opportunities, there are countless ways in which to learn, synthesize, and apply your learning to your practice. Finding strategies that *best* work for you is in itself a professional development goal!

OSOT offers a diverse listing of professionally developing opportunities. Consider strategies that you can build into your annual Professional Development Plan.

1. **Monitor OSOT's PD Event Listing.** OSOT maintains a [PD Event Listing](#) in which all PD events relevant to occupational therapy that we are made aware of are listed. Check the page regularly to support your PD planning.
2. **Make a goal on topics/issues you want to learn more about, to enrich your practice, or your ability to position/promote your practice.** These days, so much information can be delivered to your inbox so consider the following:
 - a. [Google Alerts](#) – set up an alert to receive news/information related to your interests.
 - b. [Seniors Health Knowledge Network](#) –resources and communities of practice that support sharing evidence-based care practices relating to seniors' health, for example:
 - i. [Fall Prevention Community of Practice](#) – LOOP
 - ii. [Medically-at-Risk Senior Drivers Community of Practice](#)
 - iii. Sign up for [SHKN Monthly Newsletter](#) for updates.
 - c. [Institute for Work and Health](#) – explore the website for evidence-based resources relating to return and stay at work. Sign up to receive:
 - i. [At Work](#) – quarterly publication of the Institute's latest research findings in the areas of work injury, illness, and disability prevention and stories of how these findings are applied in practice
 - ii. [Monthly E-Newsletter](#) - alerts readers to the latest research publications, events, tools, achievements, and more from the Institute for Work & Health.
 - d. [Local Health Integration Network](#) - find your LHIN website - sign up for their newsletters to monitor news, priorities, and developments in your regional health system.

- e. [Ontario Hospital Association](#) – a wealth of hospital-oriented resources. Create a profile and you can sign up to receive a variety of alerts, newsletters, and publications.
 - f. [Evidence Exchange Network – \(EEnet\)](#) – a province-wide knowledge exchange network that connects mental health and addictions stakeholders with each other and with relevant, actionable, evidence to inform decision-making. Get to know the website and its many resources. [Sign up for e-newsletters](#).
 - g. [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#) – [sign up](#) to receive monthly newsletters.
 - h. [Special Needs Strategy Website](#) – create a profile on this website to enter and view materials related to the SNS Strategy and receive notifications of updates.
 - i. [Financial Services Regulatory Authority \(FSRA\)](#) – if you work in the auto insurance system, this is an important site to know. [Sign up for their mailing list](#).
 - j. [Biomed Central \(BMC\)](#) – an open access publisher of research with an evolving portfolio of some 300 peer-reviewed journals in science, medicine, etc. [Register](#) to receive e-newsletters updates or create article alerts.
 - k. Google your interest and you'll be surprised what you can find!
3. **Make a commitment to review the OSOT website's [Practice Resource pages](#).** Divided into areas of practice you will find current issues, useful information, links, and resources to support your practice. These pages grow and evolve with member requests and suggestions so let OSOT know your needs!
4. **Supervise a Student OT.** If you can explain what you've learned or why you are doing something to someone else, then you probably really understand it yourself. Sharing knowledge with others is an excellent way to reveal your own strengths and learning opportunities (and you're contributing so much to the development of a new OT!)
5. **Get to know the research priorities of our Ontario OT academics.** Find someone who shares your interests and bring your clinical questions to their research focus, to support their research, etc. Review faculty research foci at:
- a. [McMaster University OT Faculty Research](#)
 - b. [Queens University Faculty Research Foci](#)
 - c. [University of Ottawa Faculty](#)
 - d. [University of Toronto OT Faculty](#)
 - e. [Western University OT Faculty](#)
6. **Seek a mentor.** Moving to a new focus of practice? Entering the profession? Wanting to develop a new skill? Why not commit to find a colleague who can offer support, guidance, informed

conversation, feedback, etc. View [OSOT's resources for mentors and mentees](#) and explore the Society's [Find-a-Mentor](#) online tool.

7. **Browse your OSOT Monthly Update every month** and check out:
 - a. 3+ practice resources each month
 - b. Listing of upcoming PD events – webinars, workshops, conference
 - c. Policy updates – stay up-to-date and informed on recent changes that may impact your practice
8. **Apply for an OSOT Research Fund Grant Program.** This grant (\$1000) is targeted to support clinicians or clinician/researcher partnerships to investigate a question of relevance in the clinical context. Learn more [here](#).
9. **Offer to present a webinar or workshop.** The skills developed in consolidating your presentation and sharing with others will take you far. OSOT is always interested to hear from potential speakers/presenters. [Contact us!](#)
10. **Review OSOT's [Finding Evidence for your Practice](#)** page - consider alternatives and tools for finding evidence and integrating this into your practice.
11. **Be a mentor!** Consider how you can build and consolidate your skills as a clinician and as an educator/consultant/leader. Be rewarded as you learn together with someone and share knowledge and experience to help another OT develop their skills and confidence. View [OSOT's resources for mentors](#) and consider a commitment to be listed in OSOT's [Find-a-Mentor Online Tool](#).
12. **Join OSOT's [Community of Practice](#).** Our current communities are 1) Seating and Mobility, and 2) Driving. These virtual communities are great places to find and post resources, ask and answer questions on your clinical needs, and network with others.
13. **Browse OSOT's [Archived Webinars](#) listing and view one you find relevant to your practice.** OSOT's library of archived webinars is growing and can be an enduring, accessible resource to you when it is convenient!
14. **Get to know the Advocacy Organizations working to support the clients you serve.** They can be a wealth of information, resources, and supports. Use them for your clients and your own learning resources. You can google search or look on Charity Village's [health/disease organizations](#) listing to get you started.
15. **Follow-up on networking leads after your next workshop or conference.** Exchange business cards, then follow up. Widen your network of peers who share your interests. It's easy to send an email and make connections who can be sources of consultation, learning, job postings, and support to your work.
16. **Brief your Team after you've attended a PD event.** Share the top three points you took away, innovative products you saw, circulate your workshop materials, and share your suggestions on how you and the team could integrate or engage any of the learning you've brought back. This shares the experience with the Team but also reinforces your own learning.

17. **After a PD event DO participate in the online evaluation surveys.** Organizers want/need feedback and when you're thinking through your responses, you are reminded of what you learned which can help consolidate your take away ideas from the event.
18. **Learn something about the client experience of OT.** Why not volunteer to host a public promotion booth, to present to a LTC Home's Resident Council, to host a forum that invites consumer perspectives or to view these video vignettes of the Change Foundation on the [experiences of seniors in our health system](#). Learning from our clients' perspectives can be invaluable – think of options to expand your perspectives in this area.
19. **Make a goal to understand the policy context of the sector in which you work.** What legislation frames the sector in which you work? Knowledge of the policy structure supports your ability to position your services, and to advocate for change or to be in a position to comment on proposed changes when regulation or legislation is under scrutiny. [OSOT's Practice Resource pages](#) can be a good place to start.
20. **Write a story based on your practice or a particular client.** This develops your writing skills in a different way than charting ever will! It's a good way to begin to look at how you share the value of OT. OSOT is always looking for stories to populate the [OTOntario website](#) so, if you're looking for a real place to land these valuable stories, please send them along to osot@osot.on.ca .
21. **Ask questions.** Many of us think asking questions is a sign of ignorance, but look at it as a sign of maturity. If you are confident enough in your own intelligence to speak up when you need clarification, you'll have no trouble becoming a lifelong learner.
22. **Take a coffee break with a colleague.** Chatting with a colleague can be a source of terrific information/support that can enrich your practice. As we talk about a difficult day, a great new article we read, etc., we're learning, consolidating our thinking, considering options, etc. in the best way possible – with another colleague!
23. **Ensure your PD goals are measurable.** Setting SMART– *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Based* goals is an effective process for setting and achieving your professional development goals. Developing skill in writing SMART goals is a good PD goal in itself and is helpful with clients too!
24. **Submit your PD fees to the Allied Health Professional Development Fund (AHPDF).** Get up to \$1,500 reimbursed from this government fund. Submit prior to March 31st 2020 to take advantage of this years funding. Apply [here](#).
25. **Research Electronic Health Libraries for research and journal articles.** Through the AHPDF gain free access to electronic health libraries including: MEDLINE, CINAHL, and DynaMed Plus.