

FALL 2008

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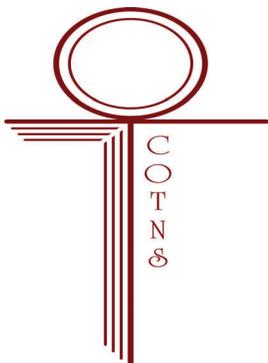
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COTNS NEWS

2008 AGM UPDATE

COTNS and NSSOT jointly held their annual general meetings on June 21, 2008. The number of therapists present was phenomenal and provided a fabulous opportunity to network, reflect on commonalities in practice, and learn about the hard work the College has been completing on a provincial level. This year several sites joined the meeting via videoconference with great success (with the exception of the momentary loss of power at the IWK). We sincerely hope that more therapists will join us via videoconference in the future.

Barb Stegemann, a motivational speaker and journalist who has penned *The 7 Virtues of a Philosopher Queen*, was the guest speaker. She promoted living life with conviction and becoming an ambassador for all we do in promoting empowerment. She related events in our lives to philosophy and how we can choose our direction based upon our perceptions and beliefs.

Barb has taken philosophical principles learned in formal classroom learning and applied it to leading a meaningful and fulfilling life. She has learned that perception is reality and we, as a society or individuals, must assess what we want to achieve and set out to meet our goals.

Barb noted that she felt our profession was truly honourable and reflected the attitudes and beliefs presented in her works. She called each occupational therapist the embodiment of a true

“Philosopher King or Queen” as we strive to meet virtues in our own lives but we also empower others to strive to live life to the fullest. Barb encouraged occupational therapists to continue to empower our clients in their daily lives. She related our careers to the roots of philosophical thinking and promoted our role as facilitator and advocate in the lives of others and ourselves.

The seven virtues are as follows:

1. Adopting an attitude of **WONDER** instead of doubt can lead to professional and personal advancement.
2. Obtain a strong mind, body and spirit connection through the practice of **MODERATION**.
3. Uncover the **TRUTH**.
4. Transform fear into **COURAGE**.
5. Trust your instincts to ask the right questions in the pursuit of **JUSTICE**.
6. Obtain the **WISDOM** needed to discover your life’s calling and purpose.
7. See the age-old view of **BEAUTY** as the result of balance and proportion in your life.

As time passes and the year progresses, we can reflect on the philosophical concepts provided to us in such a light-hearted, passionate forum and reflect on how we perceive our profession and its influence on our daily lives.

“Women own the buying power in North America and yet one in five children lives in poverty. Where have we given up our power? Read the chapter on Justice.

The diet industry is a billion dollar industry yet we continue to get heavier and further in debt. The chapters on Moderation and Beauty examine the reversal of this.

In politics 52% of the voting power in North America is owned by women and yet we have only 20% representation by women in political seats. Why? Read about Courage.”

Women. Individuals with mental illness. Living daily with a physical challenge. Many occupational therapists as well as the clients with whom we work face obstacles and challenges within daily living.

What forces or ideas guide how we perceive life? How does this affect our personal lives? Our practice? Our interaction with clients? COTNS was honoured to have author Barb Stegemann as a guest speaker at the June 21, 2008 Annual General Meeting at the IWK hospital.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES - A USEFUL DISCUSSION

Following the COTNS AGM, a discussion on professional boundaries was held. In any professional relationship there is an inherent power imbalance. The therapist's power arises from the client's trust that the therapist has the expertise to help with his or her problems, and the client's disclosure of personal information that would not normally be revealed. The fact that services cannot be provided unless clients are willing to cooperate does not change the fundamental power imbalance. Therefore, the therapist has a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the client, and is ultimately responsible for managing boundary issues and is therefore, accountable should violations occur.

Given the power imbalance that is inherent in the professional/client relationship, clients may find it difficult to negotiate boundaries or to recognize or defend themselves against boundary violations. As well, clients may be unaware of the need for professional boundaries and therefore, may at times, even initiate behaviour or make requests that could constitute boundary violations.

The primary concern in establishing and managing boundaries with each individual client must be the best interest of the client. Except for behaviours of a sexual nature or obvious conflict of interest activity, boundary considerations often are not clear-cut matters of right and wrong. Rather, they are dependent upon many factors and require careful thinking through of all the issues, always keeping in mind the best interest of the client.

Therapists present for the discussion were asked to formulate questions in which they felt they noted or had reservations about boundaries. Each of the groups discussed a different member's question and analysed how it could be managed while meeting the best interest of the client.

The questions were varied and encompassed a multitude of practice. As the questions were discussed, therapists tended to relate a personal experience with many of the questions. Regrouping, it was determined that if one asks the following questions, one may better perceive if professional boundaries may have been violated.

- ◆ Is this in my client's best interest?
- ◆ Whose needs are being served?
- ◆ Will this have an impact on the service I am delivering?
- ◆ Should I make a note of my concerns or consult with a colleague?
- ◆ How would this be viewed by the client's family or significant other?
- ◆ How would I feel telling a colleague about this?

- ◆ Am I treating this client differently (e.g. appointment length, time of appointments, extent of personal disclosures)?
- ◆ Does this client mean something special to me?
- ◆ Am I taking advantage of the client?
- ◆ Does this action benefit me rather than the client?
- ◆ Am I comfortable in documenting this decision/behaviour in the client file?
- ◆ Does this contravene the Regulated Health Professions Act, the standards of Professional Conduct or the Code of Ethics, etc.?

We deal with ethical and professional challenges daily and most occupational therapists generally manage boundary issues and interact appropriately with clients. Similarly, there are moments when we are all challenged and question ourselves and are too involved in a situation to analyze it critically. Having frank, regular, open communication with our colleagues is essential to empowering all clients and maintaining equality and justice for all our clients.

The discussions held at the AGM certainly provided an opportunity for reflection not only on our own professional practice and interactions but also in our personal interactions, interactions of our co-workers and overall practice setting and potential challenges we may face.

The COTNS Board would like to hear any input or suggestions you may have on discussion topics for the 2009 Annual General Meeting. Therapists who attended thoroughly enjoyed the day and the information provided. If you missed this enlightening and interactive day, we look forward to seeing you next year. If you had the opportunity to attend, the Board would like to thank you for the exchange of ideas and personal stories. Your interactions provided much contemplation and thought-provoking communication.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tentative date for the next Annual General Meeting for the College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Society of Occupational Therapists is set for Saturday, June 20, 2009.

Stay tuned for details.

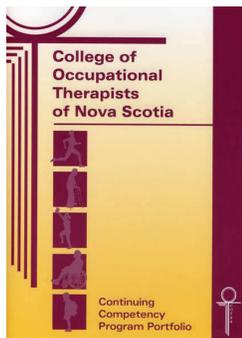
NEW PRACTICE COMMITTEE sets up shop in CAPE BRETON

Marrying the need for more volunteers on the College's practice committee with the College's strategic direction to increase the number of volunteers from outside the Capital region, the Board proposed that a second practice committee be established in Cape Breton. This idea was met with such enthusiasm that we have had more individuals volunteer than we can actually use at the present time. The College thanks all those who have volunteered and we look forward to using all talents in the future in order to ensure the long term viability of this Committee. The membership of this committee will turn over on a staggered basis to ensure both continuity and a fresh input of ideas. Be assured that the College will be calling on all the remaining individuals who volunteered, in the future.

Joint Position Statement – Interprofessional Collaborative Practice

COTNS is pleased to provide you with a copy of the joint position statement – Interprofessional Collaborative Practice (CHECK NAME) included with this Newsletter. This position statement was developed by the Nova Scotia Health Regulators Network through the lead of the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia. The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia is a signatory of this document and we believe that it clearly articulates the College's position on interprofessional collaborative practice.

This position statement begins the work of the Nova Scotia Health Regulators Network with respect to interprofessional collaborative practice (MAKE CONSISTENT WITH TITLE). The Health Regulators Network is reviewing how the various regulatory bodies can work together in order to reduce the barriers, real or perceived, that interfere with collaborative practice. A working group has been formed and will report back to the Network in January 2009.



CONTINUING COMPETENCY

In May 2008, the Continuing Competency Committee initiated a pilot test to evaluate the newly developed Assessment and Professional Development Plan. The intended outcome of the pilot test was to identify and resolve potential problems, and to assess and enhance its overall usefulness and relevancy to members before implementation.

The following components were assessed:

- ◆ Assessment of Current Practice & Professional Development Guide
- ◆ Self Assessment Tool
- ◆ Peer/Colleague and Client Feedback
- ◆ Assessment of Current Practice Summary
- ◆ Professional Development Plan
- ◆ Professional Development Log

Highlights of the results of the pilot test:

Methods:

A package containing the six components of the Assessment and Professional Development Plan with accompanying feedback forms was distributed to 50 volunteers (members) working in a variety of roles, fields and settings. The volunteers were instructed to consider their specific area of practice/role as they read through each component, and then, using the feedback forms, determine the usefulness and relevancy of each component to their practice. Participants were also encouraged to offer suggestions on how to improve the tool. Completed feedback forms including the tool were returned in a stamped, addressed envelope for analysis.

Participants Profile:

In total, 35 packages were completed and returned (a response rate of 75%) by members who volunteered to participate in the pilot test.

The breakdown by practice areas shows participants came from a variety of settings with the majority from Mental Health at 38.30% (13), followed by Geriatrics/Long Term Care with 23.5% (8) and physical rehabilitation with 8.80% (3). Other areas with smaller number of participants included private practice, pediatrics, acute care, physical medicine, academic/research, Red Cross, and child/adolescent mental health.

Breakdown by job title shows that 70.7% (24) of the participants identified occupational therapist as their job title. Other job titles identified included care/case coordinator, owner/business partner, researcher, director, and program manager.

The Assessment of Current Practice & Professional Development Guide

The Guide provides step by step instructions and examples on how to complete the Self Assessment and Professional Development Plan.

From the responses, 74.3% (26) of the participants reported the amount of information in the Guide was about right and 25.7% (9) reported that the Guide had too much information. About 78.8% (26) of the participants found the Guide useful in helping them complete the Assessment and Professional Development Plan while 21.1% found it somewhat useful.

In general, participants were pleased with the Guide. However, there were suggestions and concerns raised about the length, format and relevancy of the Guide to some practice areas.

COTNS NEWS

Following are some subjective comments:

- ◆ *The Guide is very useful, thorough in content, easy to follow instructions, well organized, lots of examples. Very practical in helping to fill out the form.*
- ◆ *Good information, but the layout is confusing and repetitive. Has great potential when sorted out and made less clinical. Use of flow chart will be helpful.*
- ◆ *Liked the inclusion of examples (both for physical and mental health). Probably would have been useful to have a variety of examples to reflect the various practice areas.*
- ◆ *There is too much focus on clinical; does not apply to non-traditional practice such as research, management, etc*
- ◆ *Would be helpful to include FAQ*

Self Assessment Tool

The Self Assessment Tool is based on the Essential Competencies of Practice for Occupational Therapists in Canada and it helps the therapists to identify the knowledge and skills they have, as well as those they need to improve.

In general, 81.8% (27) of the participants who responded found the information included in the Self Assessment Tool useful and 18.23% (6) reported it to be somewhat useful. In regards to the Rating Scale, 81.8% (27) found the scale useful in assessing their competency in each of the performance indicators and 18.2% (6) reported it to be somewhat useful.

Overall, subjective information from participants was satisfactory, however, some concerns were raised about the relevancy of the self assessment tool in meeting the needs of therapists working in non-clinical settings. Some found the tool to be too long and detailed. There was also some suggestion on how to improve the rating scale.

Following are some subjective comments:

- ◆ *The rating scale is well thought out and understandable. The cues included under some of the competencies are very helpful in understanding what the competency was looking at evaluating.*
- ◆ *The check list format would be quick. The area for growth is very useful in helping to organize and prioritize future learning.*
- ◆ *The tool does not apply to therapists working in a non-clinical role. The cues should cover all areas of practice, not just clinical.*

- ◆ *The tool is too long. If possible, it should be shortened to ensure that it is completed appropriately and not skimmed.*
- ◆ *Allow more space for "subjective" comments.*

Peer/Colleague and Client Feedback

The Peer/Colleague and Client Feedback Forms are intended to be used by the therapist to receive feedback on his/her performance from a colleague and client.

About 80.6% (25) of the participants found the peer/colleague feedback form useful in assessing their competency, 16.1% (5) reported it to be somewhat useful and 3.2% (1) reported it as not useful.

For the Client Feedback Form, about 74.2% (23) found the information useful, 16.1% (5) reported it to be somewhat useful and 9.7% (3) not useful.

Subjective feedback had mixed review. Some participants found the Peer/Colleague Feedback relevant and useful, while others had concerns about its usefulness in getting timely and accurate feedback from peers and colleagues.

The Client Feedback Form had similar responses. Participants were concerned about difficulties one may face in getting feedback from clients in settings such as long term care, and also the possibility of compromising therapist/client relationship due to power dynamics.

Below are some of the comments and suggestions:

- ◆ *I believe my co-workers will not have difficulty completing this form. It is clear, not too long and it's relevant.*
- ◆ *Peer feedback is pretty foreign for some, not all co-workers would answer the questions completely truthfully for fear of causing tension in the workplace.*
- ◆ *The Client Feedback was short, simple & easy to understand. The questions are relevant and not intimidating to the client.*
- ◆ *Problematic without ethical guidelines re: power dynamics.*
- ◆ *Client feedback should be requested directly from the College and forwarded to the College – the therapist should not be the one requesting it directly from the client.*

BOARD MEMBERS

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Phyllis Williams—Vice Chair
Christine Marchessault—Treasurer
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Victoria Apold—Appointed

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METRO

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Jocelyn Brown—Resource

PRACTICE COMMITTEE

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Angela Stairs—Chair
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Amanda Burlock
Leslie Greencorn
Raylene Morykot
Lorna O’Grady
Sheila Poulton

**CREDENTIALS
COMMITTEE**

Nicole Boudreau
Nancy Littler
Scott Thieu
Tracy Vigliarolo

Assessment of Current Practice Summary

This is a summary page intended for the therapist to use to summarize and record his/her strengths and areas requiring improvement after going through the assessment.

From the responses, 93.8% (30) of the participants who responded found the Assessment of Current Practice Summary Form to be useful, 3.1% (1) reported it to be somewhat useful and 3.1% (1) not useful.

Following are some of the subjective comments:

- ◆ *Good flow to and from other sections. Identifying strengths and areas for improvement on one page.*
- ◆ *Writing down concrete professional areas requiring improvement, it made it concrete and more likely to address an action to it.*
- ◆ *Very useful form, regardless of how proficient we think we are, there is always room for improvement.*

Professional Development Plan

The Professional Development Plan provides the therapists with structure to identify professional development goals, the resources needed to achieve the goals, and the intended impact on practice.

About 96.5% (28) of the participants who responded to this question found the format of the Professional Development Plan useful in creating their professional development plan, 3.5% (1) reported it to be somewhat useful.

Following are some of the subjective comments:

- ◆ *This is the guts of the whole program! Very well laid out in a step by step process for goal achievement.*
- ◆ *Do you have to use this format for your PDP? Can one use their own version? It would be nice to have the option to use other layouts in the portfolio instead of only using this form.*
- ◆ *It would be helpful to have an electronic version.*

Professional Development Log

Professional Development Log is for therapists to keep the records of their professional development activities.

The feedback on the log was very positive. About 96.5% (28) of the participants who responded found the format and the content of the Professional Development Log in recording and tracking their professional development activities useful and 3.5% (1) reported it to be somewhat useful.

Following are some of the subjective comments:

- ◆ *It's an easy effective log to record professional development. Basic is sometimes the best!*
- ◆ *Clear; specific; related to other sections.*
- ◆ *Provides format to record all of your learning activities in one place & illustrates benefits of learning activities. Well done as a good reference when updating resume.*
- ◆ *Suggest combining Plan and log so that plans can have an extra column for hours and date to show when the plan has been implemented and met.*

Conclusion:

The feedback and suggestions for improving the assessment tool were very useful and relevant. The committee will be revising the tools, taking into consideration the feedback and suggestions.

The committee plans to focus on the following:

- ◆ Revise the Guide to reduce repetition and clarify common misunderstandings
- ◆ Provide examples that reflect a variety of work settings -such as including items that are applicable to members working in non-clinical settings
- ◆ Review and revise the Self Assessment Tool to eliminate repetition
- ◆ Include in the Self Assessment Tool “cues” that reflect non-clinical settings/roles
- ◆ Continuing to dialogue with members and encourage members to think about the Standards more broadly, particularly as they apply to the knowledge and skills they need in their day to day work (clinical and non-clinical)
- ◆ Explore options for implementing the Client Feedback without compromising therapist-client relationship
- ◆ Generate some FAQ from the pilot test feedback & comments
- ◆ Change some of the layout of the tool to make it more user-friendly
- ◆ Develop an electronic version for all the forms
- ◆ Keep members informed as the Assessment Tool is revised and refined

Immediate Work Plan:

The following are targeted for the next few months:

- ◆ Revision to Section 2 - Assessment and Professional Development Plan
- ◆ Development of Peer Assessment Program Protocol

Stay tuned for further news as the Continuing Competency Program continues to evolve. The committee will continue to maintain communication with membership. If you have questions or feedback, please contact Dorothy Edem through e-mail at daedem@eastlink.ca.

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothy Edem

The Continuing Competency Committee would like to thank the volunteers who took time off their busy schedule to participate in this pilot test. Your constructive feedback enabled the committee to make the necessary revisions to ensure that the Assessment and Professional Development Tool meets the needs of all occupational therapists in Nova Scotia regardless of practice areas, roles and settings.

Thank You!

CONTINUING
COMPETENCY
COMMITTEE

Dorothy Edem—
Co-ordinator

Joanne Comeau

Karen Landry

Jennifer Saunders

Susan Sparkes

THE FAIR REGISTRATION PRACTICES ACT— AN UPDATE

On April 24, 2008, the Minister of Labour and Workforce Development, the Honourable Mark Parent, introduced Bill No. 126 - the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act* in the Legislative Assembly. On April 29th, Mr. Parent made the following comments about this legislation:

So, Mr. Speaker, in that regard, on April 24th, I introduced a bill that would help newcomers to Nova Scotia navigate the certification and registration process and find a job in their chosen profession. The fair access to regulated professions legislation is intended to offer this framework that will help regulatory bodies to be even more transparent, objective and timely than they are now in delivering certification and registration with their professions.

I would like to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, because it's very, very important that under this Act standards for Nova Scotia certification will continue to be established by the self-regulating professions themselves. That's an important point to make - I make it when I introduced the bill and I make it again here in this House.

Regulatory bodies will maintain control of their own professional standards and will have the authority to ensure that only qualified workers receive certification in this province.

Despite the Minister's words of assurance, the proposed legislation was in fact met with significant concern by a number of the self-regulating bodies, of which there are nearly 40 named in the Bill. Many of these regulators view it as an intrusion by Government and a shift away from self-regulation. Perhaps because of this, the Bill did not proceed past first reading by the time the legislative session adjourned on May 27, 2008.

Since then the Departments of Labour & Workforce Development and Immigration have engaged in a consultative process with the affected bodies and stakeholders. In July 2008, the FARPA Working Group was established, comprising representatives of regulatory bodies as well as Governmental representatives. This Working Group has held a number of meetings and substantially revised the proposed act. The results of this work were recently unveiled at a briefing session attended by regulatory

bodies including the Registrar and legal counsel of the College of Occupational Therapists.

This most recent draft contains a number of changes from the original bill. One of the most significant changes is the removal of the requirement that the assessment of qualifications be compliant with the labour mobility provisions of the Agreement on Internal Trade. The AIT is a major and multifaceted agreement between the provinces and territories that has been in the works for some 12 years. The overarching principle of AIT's labour mobility provisions is that professional qualifications issued in one provincial/territorial jurisdiction will be recognized in any other province or territory and across virtually all occupational and professional categories. Clearly, this is a very major objective. Likewise, the removal of this from the draft legislation is a major change.

Another change of note is the title. Originally it was referred to as the "*Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*". The new proposed title is the "*Fair Registration Practices Act*". This appears to be intended to reflect that the legislation does not deal with registration standards but deals with the application and administration of standards, quite a different matter.

Other changes include that regulation-making powers have been significantly reduced and, replaced with the substantive matters in the *Act* itself. In other words, more of the details are to be found in the *Act* rather than to be done by way of regulation.

Key features of the current draft legislation include:

- ◆ The legislation contains in sections 5-12 what is referred to as the "Fair Registration Practices Code" in which is set out the various requirements including, significantly, the overriding principle that registration practices be "transparent, objective, impartial, and fair".
- ◆ Information must be provided to applicants in a clear and understandable form and must include information about the registration practices, internal reviews, length of time the process takes, registration requirements and assessment criteria, support for applicants, and applicable fees.

- ◆ Regulating bodies will be required to respond to inquiries and registration applications within a reasonable time
- ◆ Internal reviews must be conducted within a reasonable time
- ◆ The internal review process cannot be conducted by the same individuals who acted on the initial registration
- ◆ Individuals who act on internal reviews must receive training
- ◆ Regulating bodies must provide access to relevant records to applicants
- ◆ A Review Officer will be appointed and will have broad powers to administer and enforce the provisions of the new Act
- ◆ Regulating bodies will be required to submit an initial report to the Review Officer containing general information about registration practices and specific information regarding the reporting period , i.e, number of applications received and granted or rejected during reporting period. Thereafter, reports are to be filed every two years unless the Review Officer requires more frequent reporting
- ◆ The Review Officer may issue compliance orders to regulating bodies not meeting the requirements
- ◆ Failure to comply with the Act may lead to penalties of up to \$10,000

It is important to note that the current draft legislation is essentially a work-in-progress. Many of the provisions are still being reviewed by the Working Group and a number are subject to review by the Department of Justice. Also, it is not clear at this stage whether this will go through as an amendment to Bill 126 or whether a brand new bill will be introduced. What is clear however is that the Government is committed to going forward with legislation when the Legislature reconvenes on October 30, 2008.

The College of Occupational Therapists has been closely monitoring this legislation but until there is a final version of the Bill and the mechanics of its implementation become clearer, it is difficult to know exactly how this will impact registration practices at the College.

Stay tuned.

Mike O'Hara, Legal Counsel

RENEWAL 2008

The staff of the College would like to thank registrants for their patience and understanding as the College implemented changes necessary for full participation in the Canadian Institute of Health Information National Occupational Therapy Database. In an ongoing effort to improve the registration process, the College is investigating an on-line renewal option for the upcoming Registration Year.

Surrendered in good standing (by request)

In accordance with our Act, the following individuals surrendered their license with the College as of October 1, 2008:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Banks, Sheila | Bowen, Tanya |
| Browne, Steven | Cameron, Fiona |
| Doherty, Miranda | Fitzpatrick, Rae |
| Flewwelling, Tobi | Jewer, Nadine |
| Korhonen, Louise | Lee, Priscilla |
| MacAulay, Alison | MacIntosh, Jennie |
| MacLeod, Donna | McCarthy, Shirley |
| Mulherin, Kathleen | Niepel, Andrea |
| Oldford-MacIntosh, Mary | Norman, Marjorie |
| Saulnier, Jolyne | Scott, Jennifer |
| Stoyles, Shelley | Taylor, Sandra |
| Wilcox, Jacqui | Wilson, Patti |

All individuals named must apply and have their registration reinstated by the College before resuming use of title of occupational therapist and resuming practice.

FAQ - Professional Designation

Q: The College frequently receives questions from registrants regarding the College's policy related to which professional designations and titles are approved for use by registrants.

A: Registration Regulation 49 Designated Titles states that:

"A member in the practice of occupational therapy shall only use the titles 'occupational therapist', 'licensed occupational therapist'; 'registered occupational therapist'; or 'OT Reg (NS) and may use in association with the member's name any academic degree, diplomas or certificates held by the member and approved by the Board for such use."

What are some common designations in use and what do they mean.

OT Reg (NS) – This is considered to be your professional designation and refers to a therapist registered to practice in Nova Scotia. This designation must be used by all occupational therapists in Nova Scotia when signing their name and designation.

OT (C) – designates a member of CAOT. This is not an approved designation as it is the opinion of the College that it could be misleading to the public.

OTR – an American designation, not applicable or approved for use in Nova Scotia.

BScOT/MScOT or any other abbreviation of an academic qualification - This is your academic qualification and does not denote right to practice in Nova Scotia. These designations are only approved for use in conjunction with your professional designation of OT Reg(NS) and are not a requirement.

Q: What about the use of other qualifications denoting specialization within occupational therapy such as CHT (Certified Hand Therapist) or a Certificate in Assessing Driving Capabilities – can I use these designations in conjunction with my professional designation?

Registration Regulation 51(1) states that:

"No occupational therapist shall use or condone the use of any terms, titles or designations indicating specialization or expertise in any branch of occupational therapy or with respect to any particular aspect of occupational therapy or with respect to any area of preferred practice, whether approved by the Board as a specialist class or not, unless that person is registered in the Specialists Register and is using a term, title or designation approved by the Board."

As the College does not have a specialist register which would allow for the use of such titles at this time, no terms, titles or designations indicating specialization are currently approved for use by the Board.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

We are pleased to announce that the Credentials Committee has been struck and they have had their first meeting. They will be reviewing all of the College's Registration Processes in light of new legislation requirements

This Committee is made up of Nicole Boudreau, Nancy Littler, Scott Thieu and Tracy Vigliarolo. We wish to thank them for volunteering their time and look forward to working with them in their endeavours.

ACOTRO UPDATE

Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO), recently completed a project titled *Assessing the Competence of Internationally Educated Occupational Therapists for Practice in Canada: Towards a Common Approach and an Assessment Toolkit*. Confirming the ability of international applicants to practise occupational therapy in any province typically involves a review of academic credentials and determining substantial equivalency of an applicant's education. This project advanced a longstanding goal for ACOTRO - to add competency-based assessment to the process by which registration/licensure eligibility is confirmed, and provide internationally educated occupational therapists with additional ways to demonstrate their practice skills and qualifications.

The work was guided by an Advisory Committee that included project coordinator (Mary Clark), ACOTRO members from nine of the ten provinces, a representative of the Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs (Dr. Helene Polatajko) and a representative of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (Kathy Van Benthem). The input of our key stakeholders was invaluable - thank you Helene and Kathy.

Key outcomes included developing a framework for confirming substantial equivalency, exploring available options for an assessment toolkit, and identifying the preliminary requisite competencies for assessment. There was clear consensus of the project partners (ACOTRO) to continue to work towards a common approach to substantial equivalency assessment across jurisdictions and its impact on ensuring full mobility of occupational therapists in Canada.

Next steps were identified, and COTBC submitted a funding proposal for the next phase of the project. This project was funded by B.C. Ministry of Economic Development, with additional funding from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education and Employment Immigration Branch, and support from the Manitoba government.

Collaboration for External Review of CAOT Certification Exam

ACOTRO recently signed a partnership agreement with CAOT that jointly commissions an external review of the National Occupational Therapy Certification Exam (the exam) used by nine of ten occupational therapy regulators as one of the requirements for entry to practice for registration/licensure. This external review of the exam will be undertaken to identify strengths and potential areas of improvement to:

- ◆ ensure the exam provides a transparent, objective, impartial, non-discriminatory and fair assessment of candidates wishing to enter practice as occupational therapists in Canada;
- ◆ ensure public protection by minimizing the potential for unqualified candidates to successfully complete the exam; and
- ◆ ensure that the exam is an effective and appropriate entry-to-practice requirement.

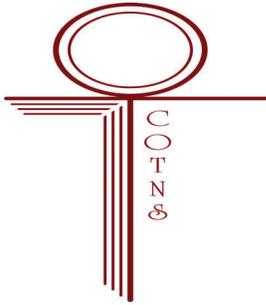
Mutual Recognition Agreement Project

ACOTRO is embarking on a project to review and revise the Occupational Therapy Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). Funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada -Labour Mobility Program, the project will update the agreement to ensure full mobility for occupational therapists duly qualified to practise in one province and seeking to move to another.

This project will update the agreement originally signed in 2001 to remove barriers for full access to the agreement by occupational therapists not currently eligible under the Approved Education schedule. It will also describe acceptable quality assurance and/or continuing competence requirements for the purpose of ensuring safe, ethical and competent practice for occupational therapists relocating within jurisdictions covered under this agreement.

Written by
Kathy Corbett, Chair, ACOTRO
College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia

*The project involved nine of the ten members of ACOTRO. Ordre des ergotherapeutes du Quebec (OEQ) chose not to participate on the Advisory Committee due to a similar project running in Quebec. However, OEQ was interested in the project and was updated regularly on the progress.



**COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA**

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OFFICE STAFF

Gayle Salsman Registrar

Joy Moulton Office Manager

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Thursday

9 am–1 pm

REMINDERS

UPDATE THE COLLEGE!

Each member is required to update the College of a change to any information contained on their annual registration forms. These may include:

1. Change of Home Address or Phone
2. Change of Employment Information
3. Change of Practicing Status
4. Change of e-mail address
5. Change of Name

Please note that while the College shares office space with NSSOT, we act as separate and distinct entities. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual OT to update both offices of information changes as required.

BOARD MEETINGS

Members of the College are permitted to attend any Board meetings if they call in advance so room may be made available to accommodate them.

Board meetings are scheduled for:

November 27, 2008
December 11, 2008
January 15, 2009
February 12, 2009
March 5, 2009
April 2, 2009
May 7, 2009
May 28, 2009

GET INVOLVED

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED