

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF OCCUPATION (SSO:USA)
POSITION STATEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

This statement describes occupational science, occupational therapy, and their relationships. The Society recognizes that multiple perspectives on these relationships exist. Rather than seek to advance a universal perspective, this statement articulates the Society's position in order to clarify its vision, mission, and strategic activities and facilitate organizational decision-making.

Occupational Science

Occupational science is the systematic study of humans as occupational beings. It aims to advance theory and other forms of knowledge that explain the multidimensional nature of human doing, being, belonging, and becoming amongst all populations, including its form, function, meaning, sociocultural, and historical contexts. The discipline of occupational science emerged from the profession of occupational therapy to support research into the phenomenon of occupation as well as to strengthen the profession's academic foundation. Occupational science draws from and contributes to a range of fields, and its knowledge is applicable to occupation-based practice, social service programs, and policy-making processes.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is a science-based profession that provides services to enable people across the lifespan to engage fully in their everyday occupations despite injury, illness, or disability. At both individual and population levels, it applies knowledge from research on lifestyles, health, and safety to promote healthy engagement in desired occupations and prevent disease and injury. Research in occupational therapy covers a broad scope, ranging from intervention, efficacy, and translational research, to studies of people's experiences with disabilities.

Relationships between Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

The relationships between occupational science and occupational therapy are typical of those between scientific disciplines and the professions they support. The shared historical roots of the two enterprises and their congruous emphasis on occupation yield multiple and reciprocal benefits despite distinctly different missions. Occupational science research can inform and enhance occupational therapy practice by strengthening the profession's understanding of occupation, its recognition of clients as occupational beings, and how to best deploy that knowledge in practice. Occupational therapy research can inform and enhance occupational science by deepening understandings about experiences of disability and aspects of intervention. Occupational therapy provides occupational science with valuable social relevance through its application of occupational science research. Occupational science degree programs support the profession by producing scholars who often assume faculty roles in occupational therapy educational programs.

Implications of These Relationships for the Society

Because the Society fosters research that theoretically develops or explains the application of ideas about occupation and/or occupational beings, it takes a welcoming and inclusive stance in regard to the congruent interests of occupational science and occupational therapy. Thus, the

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45 Society's activities aim to nurture the relationships of occupational science and occupational
46 therapy as described herein.