Occupational Therapist & Physiotherapy Assistant Program Offers Field Experience

by Jason White

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"With a physical therapist assistant what they would be doing is assisting the therapist in things like getting the patient to learn how to dress themselves again, bathing, tub transfers and more," says Pat Lee an instructor in the Occupational Therapist Assistant/ Physiotherapy Assistant program at Centennial College. "Not only do we do these things in class, we do placements with the students. So, in their second semester, they're going out one time a week into the different facilities. By their fourth semester, they're doing two five-week placements."

While Ms. Lee does a great job of giving an overview of this occupation therapy program at occupational therapy university, let's take a look at some of the details. If you are interested in applying for this undertaking, which results in an Ontario College Diploma, you must present at minimum an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent or be 19 years of age or older. In addition, you must also possess: Compulsory English 12C, or U or skills assessment, or equivalent and Biology 11C or U or equivalent. Possession of minimum admission requirements does not guarantee admission into the occupation therapy training.

By the end of your time in the program, you will be able to: communicate appropriately and effectively, through verbal, nonverbal, written and electronic means, with clients, their families, significant others, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and other healthcare providers; participate in the effective functioning of interprofessional healthcare teams; establish, develop, maintain and bring closure to client-centred, therapeutic relationships; document and complete client records in a thorough, objective, accurate and nonjudgmental manner; develop and implement strategies to maintain, improve and promote professional competence; perform effectively through the application of relevant knowledge of health sciences, psychosociological sciences and health conditions; and perform functions common to both physiotherapy and occupational therapy practices that contribute to the development, implementation and modification of intervention/treatment plans, under the supervision of and in collaboration with the occupational therapist and/or physiotherapist.

These skills are taught through a variety of courses that combine practical and academic study. Faculty members ensure that students are provided with the educational tools, training and hands-on experience that is necessary to meet career challenges with enthusiasm, professionalism and current industry knowledge. Specific courses within the occupation therapy program include: Normal Functions and Movement, Issues in Health Aging, Conditions Impacting Function, Establishing Therapeutic Communication, Mental Health Concepts & Techniques, Rehabilitation Practice, and more.

This occupation therapy program also requires students to partake in a fieldwork experience that provides the opportunity for application of acquired skills in a clinical setting with a range of clients. Fieldwork placement requirements include CPR Level HCP (Health Care Provider) and standard first aid certification, a clear vulnerable police check prior to semester 2, immunization review form and completion of a mask fit test.

Upon graduation, students work as physiotherapist assistants or occupational therapist assistants in hospitals, nursing homes, seniors' residences, schools, rehabilitation centres, and the private industry. Occupational therapist assistants deal with treatment that helps individuals improve their ability to perform daily activities, such as dressing or feeding themselves. Physiotherapist assistants focus on the large motor functions such as strength, balance and range of motion.

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Jason writes about the a Occupational Therapist Assistant/Physiotherapist Assistant program, which includes courses such as Normal Functions and Movement, Issues in Health Aging, Conditions Impacting Function and more.

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