



## Position Statement on Leadership of Occupational Therapy Services

### Intended Audience:

This position statement is intended for occupational therapists, healthcare administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in the management and delivery of occupational therapy services. It provides guidance on effective leadership practices that align with professional standards, regulatory requirements, and evidence-informed principles.

### Statement:

The New Brunswick Association of Occupational Therapists (NBAOT) recognizes the need for effective leadership of occupational therapy services to ensure high-quality, equitable, and collaborative care. NBAOT recommends that occupational therapy services be led by a qualified occupational therapist to uphold professional standards, meet regulatory requirements, and promote evidence-informed practices.

Evidence-informed practice integrates the best available research evidence, clinical and professional expertise, and client preferences and contexts to guide decisions. This approach ensures that occupational therapy services remain relevant, effective, and aligned with evolving professional and societal needs. It also reflects the commitment of occupational therapists to justice, equity, and social accountability in their practice.

When the manager of occupational therapy services is not an occupational therapist, it is recommended, when possible, that a qualified member of the occupational therapy team be assigned a leadership role to assist the manager in fulfilling occupational therapy specific leadership responsibilities. This occupational therapy services' leader will require sufficient time to adequately respond to the responsibilities they are accountable for. Examples of key responsibilities for the OT leader are as follows:

### Key Responsibilities of Occupational Therapy Leadership:

1. **Provide Leadership, Vision, and Direction**
  - Develop and oversee the vision, mission, and strategic goals of occupational therapy services.

- Foster a culture of continuous learning, collaboration, and respect among occupational therapy staff.
  - Act as a role model and mentor for the professional growth of occupational therapy team members.
2. **Ensure Quality and Equity**
    - Stay informed about the latest evidence and emerging practices to guide service improvements.
    - Address systemic barriers and inequities in access to care, ensuring services meet the needs of all clients.
    - Implement, support, and monitor quality improvement initiatives that reflect evidence-informed practices.
  3. **Support Occupational Therapy Staff Development**
    - Provide training, orientation, and resources to ensure all occupational therapy team members meet professional, regulatory and organizational standards.
    - Conduct or contribute to occupational therapy staff performance reviews and provide constructive feedback to enhance skills and competencies.
    - Promote culturally safe, anti-oppressive, and inclusive workplace practices.
  4. **Provide leadership for Occupational Therapy Operations**
    - Oversee clinical workflows and caseload distribution to optimize occupational therapy service delivery.
    - Participate in recruitment, onboarding, and retention of occupational therapy staff.
    - Provide input into occupational therapy budgets and ensure resources are allocated effectively.
  5. **Maintain Regulatory Compliance**
    - Ensure all occupational therapy staff are properly licensed and adhere to regulatory and accreditation standards.
    - Ensure occupational therapy documentation and reporting meets documentation standards, demonstrating accountability and transparency.
    - Regularly review and contribute to the updating of policies that align with ethical principles and legal requirements.
  6. **Promote Collaboration and Advocacy**
    - Build connections with stakeholders, including clients, other professionals, service providers, and regulatory bodies.
    - Advocate for the role of occupational therapy within the organization and the broader community.
    - Encourage partnerships to enhance service delivery and professional development.

## Why Effective Leadership Matters:

Occupational therapy leadership ensures that occupational therapy services are responsive, equitable, and aligned with professional and regulatory expectations. It enhances client outcomes, supports staff, and promotes the values of equity, justice, and social accountability in practice. Moreover, evidence-informed occupational therapy practice is critical for maintaining high standards and fostering trust among clients and team members alike.

## References:

1. Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations (ACOTRO), Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs (ACOTUP), & Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT). (2021). *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada*. Retrieved from <https://acotro-acore.org>
2. Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations, & Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs. (2024). *Joint Position Statement: Toward Equity and Justice: Enacting an Intersectional Approach to Social Accountability in Occupational Therapy*. Retrieved from <https://caot.ca>

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