

Information for new graduates: Introducing an innovative resource book entitled INSIDEmyJOB-Insider Information for Early Career Occupational Therapists

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Introduction

The recruitment and retention of occupational therapists continues to be an important focus for the profession. INSIDEmyJOB-Insider Information for Early Career Occupational Therapists aims to contribute positively by addressing potential problems during the transition from tertiary student to fully effective entry-level practice in Australia.

Objectives

This paper outlines the literature concerning the period of transition from tertiary student to occupational therapist. Then, the 'Transition to Practice' research project to develop an innovative information resource book is described. This paper presents a content summary of the resulting 270 page resource book. The evaluation and potential future development are discussed.

Description

Department of Human Services (Victoria) funded a project to deliver a resource book of information to assist completing occupational therapy students to make a positive transition to fully effective entry-level practitioners. The resource book was distributed to all Victoria's final year occupational therapy students in 2008. The book is focused on understanding and managing the impact of the broader context of practice on work with clients. Based on the pertinent literature and on qualitative investigations conducted as part of this project, topics covered in the book include: Career Development: Being a Professional; Professional Competence; Workplace Learning; Working in Teams; Organisational Dynamics; and Marketing.

Discussion

As part of addressing workforce issues, there has been a history of activity focused specifically on exploring the needs of newly qualified occupational therapists. Academics, managers, special interest groups and professional associations have contributed to identifying both the problems experienced by new graduates as well as possible solutions to these problems. There is a need to continue to develop an innovative matrix of strategies to facilitate a positive transition from student to practitioner. INSIDEmyJob complements other activities including curriculum development, mentoring, peer circles, supervision and credentialing pathways.

Conclusion

INSIDEmyJob is the first information resource of this kind in Australia, and is aligned with international initiatives. There is potential to learn from each other's experiences and collaborate in the future.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy

This paper explores the specific information useful during the transition from tertiary student to fully effective entry-level occupational therapist.