



The Affordable Healthcare Act (ACA) and Fieldwork Education

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Let's be honest, if you are reading this article on fieldwork education, you are most likely one of the best fieldwork educators in the state. You are the fieldwork educator who enjoys passing on the legacy of your practice to future occupational therapy practitioners. What I would like to bring you in this SIS section is recognition of the gift you give to yourself and to others when you engage in the fieldwork process.

WE have a profession that is exceptional. Ranked consistently as a top 10 profession, we earn a higher wage individually than the average household (\$45,169 in Florida, 2011), and most importantly, we get to help people. We really are given the opportunity to improve peoples' health through the use of occupation. Through the very nature of our job roles, we get the chance to leave an impression on each client we serve, each team member we work with, each family member we talk to, AND we have the opportunity to leave an impression on future practitioners.

As a point of fact, each of us leaves an impression on everyone we meet. The culmination of these impressions is what leaves the legacy of our lives. How will you be remembered? The choices you make determine the impressions you leave on others. I will encourage you to reflect on the way you would like to be remembered, how you would like to impact others in this world, because that reflection will determine how you treat and work today.

Consider the following ways that you can have a positive impact on your environment, and live a life to be remembered. Here are a few ideas:

- **Be exceptional in your actions.** Strive to demonstrate quality with your actions. You are serving as a role model to everyone you meet. Your co-workers, your clients, your client's families and your students. It only takes one person demonstrating excellence to improve the behaviors of those around them.
- **Encourage and support others.** There is a choice when someone shares their life with you, you can tear them down or lift them up. Take the time to reassure, inspire, and support those you come in contact with. It can start small, think: who can I support today? Pick one person and identify the person you will give a boost to. We come in contact with clients who, lets face it, are not at the high point in their lifespan, or they wouldn't be with us. Help them to remember the joys of where they

came from and help them get back on track. Be the person remembered as the one who really lifted the spirits of your clients and co-workers, not someone forgotten, or worse, who negatively impacted a recovery through negativity.

- **Commit yourself to a higher purpose** – This can be spiritual in nature or secular. People are invigorated and energized when their actions have purpose and meaning. This idea should be familiar to you since it is a core value of our profession; we can use this concept on ourselves! If your purpose is to make a significant impact on a clients' health, or a caregivers' spirit, or a students' development, it makes the day carry more purpose than going to work so you can make a car payment. Our profession is one where we can impact others positively without much more effort than our professional roles. We are entrusted with our clients personal lives. With the information we have, we can help restore their purpose in life, or at least give it a shot. The same can be done with a student, don't just demonstrate the minimal skills needed to be an entry level practitioner, mentor them to fully appreciate the depth of our profession!

There are many practitioners like Jackee Meyer, MOT, who continuously mentors students to be more than they think they can be. She strives to have a positive impact on those around her, and has demonstrated the ability to be exceptional as a practitioner as well as a fieldwork educator I asked her to explain the steps she has taken to develop her skills. As you read what she shared, note how she clearly identifies, her mentor before her, she commits herself to a higher purpose, encourages those around her, and strives for excellence in her actions.

What did you do that developed your maturity as a fieldwork educator? I did my level II fieldwork under Kathy Taylor who was my supervisor at St. Mary, and we are still working together today. Having a phenomenal fieldwork educator, like Kathy and working with a phenomenal population, I saw clearly the purpose for OT intervention. Ironically, when the opportunity arose, to work at the same facility, I couldn't pass it up. Maintaining the professional relationship with my FE gave me a resource to contact whenever I had a question. She made me want to give that [mentorship] back to my students as well.

I also enjoy leadership roles and responsibilities. As time passes I welcome the opportunity to guide students. I mentor them in the same way Kathy did me. Being a fieldwork educator is a lot of work, but it is an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life. ***I get energized and challenged from the students. It is very rewarding.*** I think the important thing is to

