

## Summer 2022 UF OT Newsletter



### Letter from the chair

Dear Colleagues, Advisory Board Members, Friends, Alumni, and Students:

We hope you will find our Summer newsletter informative and telling of UF OT's continued expansion, evolution, and excellence in research, teaching, and clinical services. We particularly want to highlight two stupendous faculty members who have joined our team: Dr. Suny Darcy, a clinical assistant professor, and Lindsey Telg, MOT, OTR/L, an adjunct lecturer. Three faculty members were promoted, including Dr. Christine Myers to Clinical Professor, and Drs. Consuelo Kreider and Mike Moorhouse to Clinical Associate Professors. Our faculty members have received three new grants, an NIH R-21 (PI: Dr. C J Liu); a Veteran's Administration Autonomous Vehicle Award (PI: Classen); and a Florida Department of Transportation Award for

examining autonomous ride-sharing services among older adults (PI: Classen). Likewise, our faculty has produced 42 peer-reviewed publications in reputable and/or high-impact journals, as well as 4 book chapters. We are also highlighting our academic and service program successes in the newsletter and invite you to enjoy reading about UF OT!

Sherrilene Classen, Ph.D., MPH, OTR/L, FAOTA, FGSA  
Professor and Chair: Department of Occupational Therapy  
University of Florida | College of Public Health and Health Professions  
1225 Center Drive, HPNP Room 2107 | Gainesville, FL 32611

## NEW FACULTY

### UF OT welcomes Suny Darcy and Lindsey Telg



Sanaz “Sunny” Darcy, OTD, OTR/L is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Occupational Therapy Department, College of Public Health and Health Professions, University of Florida. She received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology at the University of Maryland, College Park (2007), her Master’s Degree in Occupational Therapy (2010) from the University of St. Augustine, and her Clinical Doctorate of Occupational Therapy (2015) from Rocky Mountain University for Health Professionals. Her previous academic appointment was that of Assistant Professor (2017-2022), at the University of St. Augustine.

Dr. Darcy has over 10 years of clinical occupational therapy practice including expertise in adult rehabilitation, family and designing interventions for older adults with dementia, and their caregivers and/or family members. Her research interests pertain to Veteran mental health practices, diabetes self-management, and adult rehabilitation post-stroke.

Since 2019 she has been serving as a Florida Ambassador for the American Occupational Therapy Association Political Action Committee.



Ms. Lindsey Telg, MOT, OTR/L is an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Occupational Therapy, College of Public Health and Health Professions, University of Florida. She received her Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences at Florida International University (2006) and her Masters in Occupational Therapy from the University of Florida (2012). While in her Masters program, she founded the Occupational Therapy Equal Access Clinic which is still in operation today.

Ms. Telg worked in public health for the Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center overseeing a large youth health education program. As an Occupational Therapist, she has worked in adult inpatient rehabilitation, adult outpatient, and outpatient pediatrics. She specializes in care for clients with traumatic brain injury, executive function challenges, pediatric feeding delays, and trauma-based concerns. Ms. Telg has been an adjunct instructor in the Department of Occupational Therapy since 2016 and has taught or assisted in many of the courses offered in the Doctorate of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program.

She has received the Florida Occupational Therapy Award of Appreciation (2013), was selected for the American Occupational Therapy Emerging Leaders Program (2014), and received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award (2017)

## NEW GRANTS

### UFOT awarded Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grant



*Team members: Drs. Sherrilene Classen, Carla Vandeweerd, Justin Mason, Nichole Stetten, and Mr. Mark Reid*

UFOT received an FDOT grant to assess older adult perceptions when using autonomous ride-sharing services in five Florida counties. Drs. Sherrilene Classen and Carla Vandeweerd (Co-PI) and their team of co-investigators (Drs. Justin Mason and Nichole Stetten) and industry partner Mark Reid from Beep received a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Grant (Project ID: TEO-22-04) to assess Safety and Mobility Benefits of Autonomous Ride Sharing Services Among Older Adults in five Florida Counties.

The grant “kicked-off” in May 2022, with the goal to determine older adults’ perceptions before and after exposure to autonomous ride-sharing services. The information is critical for informing education, practice, and policy initiatives pertaining to facilitators and challenges for autonomous ride-sharing services.

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# Leadership and spirituality



Dr. Sherrilene Classen has received a UF Faculty Enhancement Opportunity Award, entitled: "Leadership and Spirituality—A "new" model for PHHP Academic Leaders." During this "mini-sabbatical", Dr. Classen will study and apply the principles of an Integral Model that subscribes to frameworks of leadership and spirituality. More than ever before we need to implement Spirituality, defined as "an ethic of belonging in an infinite field of universal love," with Leadership, i.e., to create a sense of belonging and equanimity among constituents to achieve optimal results for the benefit of the whole. Most disciplines are redefining themselves to prepare to deal with, manage, and imagine our "new" world with its limitations, stressors, challenges, and opportunities. Unfortunately, academic leaders do not generally subscribe to, nor have they been taught, a model of integrative (spiritual) leadership that can acceptably and adequately guide and inform them in strategy development— as role models of living and working – according to principles of a higher

Consciousness. Adoption and application of this model may accelerate our group's evolution towards responsive, integrative, and spiritual leadership – and empower us to develop and implement conscious solutions and innovations, while also guiding us in leading and solving the academic challenges of our decade.

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## Veteran use of autonomous vehicles

Dr. Classen and team (Dr. Vandeweerd, Dr. Stetten, Isabelle Wandenkolk, and our Industry partner Mark Reid) have been awarded an Office of Rural Health grant to ascertain, statewide in five Florida counties, the Veteran needs, perceptions, challenges, and opportunities inherent to the use of autonomous shuttles. The team will (1) synopsize the Veteran perspectives on accepting and adopting the autonomous shuttle, (2) identify the needs and barriers of autonomous shuttles, (3) formulate Veteran-centric recommendations, and (4) make policy recommendations to the Veteran Transportation Service, Veteran Transportation Policy, city planners, and the Florida Department of Transportation. This information is critical for ensuring optimal societal integration of mobility vulnerable Veterans—and equally important for the future planning of Veteran Transportation in the VA, given the societal trend of the U.S. transitioning to automated vehicles.

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## Dr. Liu receives an NIH grant to test home health therapy

Regaining the ability to take care of oneself after an illness or medical episode is critical for home health patients to maintain independent living at home. Toward this end, Dr. Chiung-ju (CJ) Liu developed an activity-enhanced program to augment the effect of home health rehabilitation therapy on



patients' self-care outcomes. Dr. Liu and her co-investigators, Dr. Dorian Rose from the Department of Physical Therapy and Dr. Peihua Qiu from the Department of Biostatistics, recently received a two-year research grant award from the National Institute on Aging to test this program. The research team will work with a group of Occupational Therapy practitioners at Brooks Rehabilitation on this research project.

## ACADEMICS

### Introducing Dr. Mary Jeghers



The Department is pleased to announce Doctoral graduate Mary Jeghers received her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Science on August 5th, 2022. Mary was accompanied at graduation by her dissertation Co-chairs, Dr. Sherrilene Classen and Dr. Sandra Winter. Mary's dissertation "Evidence-informed Perspectives Addressing Challenges and Opportunities for Equitable Community Mobility," makes an important contribution to the fields of rehabilitation and transportation and we congratulate her on this accomplishment.

*Left to right - Dr. Sherrilene Classen, Dr. Mary Jeghers, and Dr. Sandra Winters*

### Class of 2025 arrives on campus for in-person orientation



The Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program welcomed new students from the Class of 2025 (54 students) and BHS-OTD Class of 2026 (6 students) during orientation on August 9-10. This is the



first completely in-person orientation since 2019. Dr. Christine Myers, OTD program director, facilitated the first day with an icebreaker and a review of the curriculum. Vincent Wilson-McCoy, PPHP Student Financial Aid Advisor, also spoke to the students. A special thanks to Class of 2024 students from the Orientation Committee (Madison Wallace and Gianna Martello- co-chairs, Olivia Long and Taylor Allore) who facilitated icebreaker activities, student presentations, and tours on the second day.

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## Spring 2022 Scholarship Awardees



Congratulations to our OTD scholarship awardees (starting top row left): Jemma Miller and Thaila Schug (Judie Pink-Goldin Scholarship); Amanda Diaz de Arce, Hannah Crosby, and Madison Wallace (Jan Z. Olsen Scholarship); Rachel Scarboro and Lauren Goboff (Kay Walker Fund); Hannah Altman (Florida Elks Scholarship). Thank you to our donors for supporting our students! Your contribution makes a difference. Donate below to support future Gator OT's.

[DONATE](#)

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## SOTA hosts ice cream social for new OTD students



After a long day of orientation and touring campus on Wednesday afternoon, August 10th, SOTA held an ice cream social to get to know the incoming first-year OTD students! Students met in the graduate lounge where they listened to an informal presentation led by Madison Wallace, SOTA President, and Karen Bruchs, SOTA Vice President. This August, SOTA is planning to elect multiple new officers to their executive board, in the hopes of creating a cohesive structure for student involvement in the OTD program. There is a

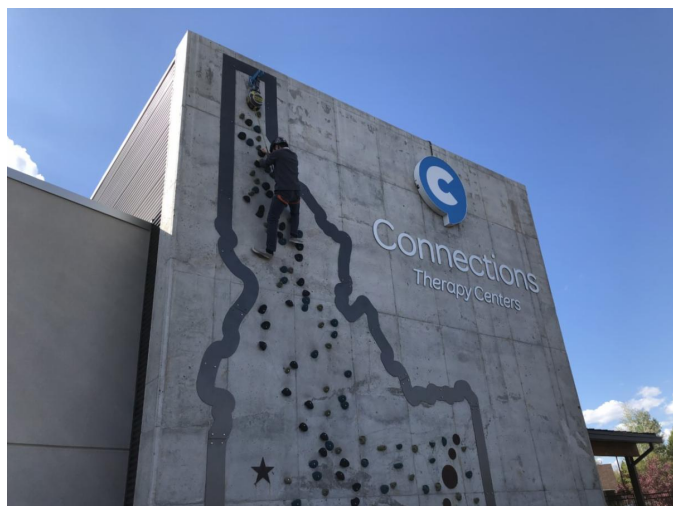
chair position available for students of every interest, and at this event, first-year students received their

## OTD Capstone Experience and Project

The OTD class of 2022 started their capstone experiences in August. Five students are doing their experiences on campus, three learning about teaching in an OTD program, one with the SmartDriver Program and one with the UF Counseling and Wellness Center. We have four students out of state. Community based experience sites include Rebuilding Together Tampa, The Brevard Zoo, Center for Independent Living, and Transitions Life Center, and this is just a few of them. Many of our alumnae support the capstone by mentoring students who want to gain in-depth skills in clinical practice at their work locations. Watch for more capstone experience details in our next newsletter or contact Dr. Linda Struckmeyer ([lstruckmeyer@phhp.ufl.edu](mailto:lstruckmeyer@phhp.ufl.edu)) for details about coming to our in person capstone poster presentations on Dec. 15th or attending a capstone fair in February to encourage a student to do their capstone with you.

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## Level 2 Fieldwork Student Gains Clinical Skills in Idaho



The Class of 2023 recently finished their first Level 2 fieldwork. Students gained experience in a variety of adult and pediatric settings. OTD Student Matthew Dunkelberger had the opportunity to complete his fieldwork at Peaks to Plains in Idaho Falls, Idaho where he was supervised by UF MOT graduate, Jennifer Unger. Matthew worked with children between birth and 18 years old in an outpatient clinic. He stated, “My fieldwork experience at Peaks to Plains was exceptional. I was excited for what each new day would bring, and I was able to be creative in occupation-based treatments. I grew professionally and personally as a result of my

experience, and I built skills that will benefit me in my next fieldwork and beyond.” Students began their second Level 2 fieldwork on August 22, 2022.

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## DRT cohort completes first semester

The eight students in the Certificate of Driver Rehabilitation Therapy Certificate program have completed their first-semester studying Foundations, Models, and Theories in Driver Rehabilitation. The class had an opportunity to develop a plan for a driver rehabilitation program and came up with some novel concepts. Dr. Sherrilene Classen provided a guest lecture to give them an overview of the state of the profession and the broader concepts. With the help of guest lecturer Dr. Mary Jeghers, they were challenged to develop road courses and found out it is harder than just saying “take the next left”. Next week we begin our 2nd semester with two courses, Screening, Assessment, Evaluation, and Intervention in Driver Rehabilitation Therapy and On-Site Mentoring.

Applications are now being accepted for Fall 2023.

**APPLY  
NOW**



## UF OT Continuing Education



Learn. Lead. Succeed. Join the UF OT online CEU program. The UF OT Online Continuing Education Program highlights research endeavors, areas of clinical expertise, and collaborative efforts with faculty and community clinicians to enhance evidence-based research and clinical best practices. New subscription content includes: Acute Care 101: Lines, Leads, and Lab Values Oh My!; The Science of Tiny Snuggles - Foundations of

Neonatal Therapy; Safe Patient Handling and Mobility with Cardiopulmonary Conditions; Tourette Syndrome and Tic Disorders; An Overview of Cancer and the Role of OT; Rehabilitation of the Burn Patient; Fieldwork Educator and Fieldwork Student Relationship.

UF OT is an AOTA Approved Provider. All online continuing education courses meet the licensure requirements for the state of Florida CE Broker. Driving-related continuing education courses also provide approved contact hours as part of the Contact Hours Associate Program (CHAP) for the Association of Driver Rehabilitation Specialists.

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## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Classen, S., Li, Y., Giang, W., Winter, S., Wei, J., Patel, B., ... Ramirez-Zamora, A. (2022). RCT protocol for driving performance in people with Parkinson's using autonomous in-vehicle technologies.

Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications, 28, 100954.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conctc.2022.100954>

Kreider CM, Hale-Gallardo J, Kramer JC, Mburu S, Slamka MR, Findley KE, Myers KJ, and Romero S (2022) Providers' Shift to Telerehabilitation at the U.S. Veterans Health Administration During COVID-19: Practical Applications. Front. Public Health 10:831762. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2022.831762

Myers, C. T., Brown, S., & Parigian, A. (2022). Exploration of a Short-term Learning Community Focused on Evidence-based Occupational Therapy Interventions for Children and Youth with Autism. Journal of Occupational Therapy Education, 6 (3). Retrieved from <https://encompass.eku.edu/jote/vol6/iss3/13>

Wang, H., Ghazi, M., Chandrashekhar, R., Rippetoe, J., Duginski, G. A., Lepak, L. V., Milhan, L. R., & James, S. A. (2022). User Participatory Design of a Wearable Focal Vibration Device for Home-Based Stroke Rehabilitation. Sensors (14248220), 22(9), 3308. <https://doi.org/10.3390/s22093308>

Waldron, D. A., Coyle, C., & Kramer, J. (2022). Aging on the Autism Spectrum: Self-care Practices and Reported Impact on Well-Being. Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders, 52(8), 3512–3522. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05229-9>



# I-DAPT UPDATE

## What do drivers really think about autonomous vehicles?

On May 18th, Dr. Classen and collaborators shared a webinar with foundational information about driver acceptance, their intention to use AVs, barriers to AV technology, and well-being related to AV technology across the driving lifespan. The deployment of autonomous vehicle (AV) technologies may hold important health and safety benefits for drivers across the driving lifespan. However, such benefits can materialize only if transportation users are willing to embrace emerging technologies. Earlier studies document a wide variance in acceptance practices, based solely on surveys of drivers. This research used a combined approach of surveys and lived experiences of drivers engaging with AV technologies to examine technology acceptance and adoption of AV technologies. The webinar summarizes findings from the analysis of younger and middle-aged drivers' perceptions of AVs before and after a) "driving" an interactive high-fidelity RTI driving simulator, in Level 4 autonomous mode, and b) riding in an autonomous shuttle (AS). Moreover, it discusses predictive models of facilitators and barriers to AV acceptance built from data collected from younger and middle-aged drivers (N=106) and older drivers (N=104). The findings reveal important foundational information about driver acceptance, their intention to use AVs, barriers to AV technology, and well-being related to AV technology across the driving lifespan.

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## Technical testing and validation of the SENSIMAT

Ph.D. student Raghu Chandrashekhara and his mentor Dr. Wang's paper "Technical testing and validation of the SENSIMAT under different weights and loading conditions" was accepted for poster presentation at the 2022 Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) conference held July 13-15, 2022.

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## Round table at Oak Hammock



Dr. C.J. Liu hosted a round table with residents at the Oak Hammock on how to design a short-term pre-rehabilitation service program to support aging in place on August 2, 2022. Residents learned about Dr. Liu's research in late-life exercise and discussed how her research meets the needs of residents in senior living communities.

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## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### UF OT welcomes a new staff member, Cynthia Menos

Cynthia Menos joins the Department of Occupational Therapy as the Administrative Support Assistant to the Chair, Dr. Classen. She holds a telecommunications



degree from UF. In her spare time, Cynthia is actively working on her portfolio for grad school with her current focus on web research and design. Cynthia also does swing dance (lindy hop) and salsa as fun social activities. We welcome Cynthia and know she will be a great asset to our department!

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## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Update

UFOTs Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force continues its work to advance its purpose. Over the summer, it held a series of workshops for faculty to write effective positionality statements to include in their syllabi. The OT Concerns Subcommittee presented to students during orientation and continues its work in the fall to respond to serve as a resource to students who want to raise issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum.

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### Inclusive Design: Availability, Acceptability, Adaptability, and Affordability

*Reprinted from AUSVI*



Coinciding with the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), July is Disability Pride Month. AUVSI's DE&I Advisory Group works to foster an environment that values the contributions of all people no matter their physical ability or other protected status. AUVSI is committed to leading the industry forward toward one that fosters a culture of inclusiveness – which we know supports innovation and solutions to some of the world's most pressing

problems. We understand that this work is ongoing and requires a deliberate approach based on integrity, respect, transparency, and a desire for growth.

During a session on “Accelerating Innovation Through Diversity of Thought” at XPONENTIAL 2022, attendees discussed how diversity and inclusiveness impact the uncrewed systems community, the technology we design, and how our systems integrate into society. Sherrilene Classen, Professor, and Chair, University of Florida, Department of Occupational Therapy, presented her research findings on how autonomous vehicles can be designed to support populations with limited mobility and how uncrewed systems can be equitably integrated into society. [Read more...](#)

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## CONFERENCES



# Occupational Therapy Summit of Scholars



A delegation of four faculty and five Ph.D. students presented at the 2022 Occupational Therapy Summit of Scholars, hosted at the University of Wisconsin. The OT Summit brings together top researchers in the field and provides mentorship opportunities to build the next generation of OT researchers.

Five UFOT Ph.D. students presented during a poster session, where they engaged in lively discussions with other attendees from across the country. Faculty members participated as leads in Collaborative Activated Research

Teams (CARTs) designed to foster new collaborations in the field. UFOT faculty also shared their expertise moderating "works in progress" sessions to provide feedback to junior scholars from universities across the country.

Assistant Professor Dr. Stefanie Bodison reflected, "The opportunity to meet in person again with scholars in the field was an enriching and rewarding experience. The small group sessions and intimate conversations the OT Summit provided have fueled me to consider the development of additional collaborations in the future."

UFOT looks forward to serving as one of four host universities for the upcoming 2023-2026 OT Summit cycle, with the summit coming to Gainesville in 2024.

*Pictured from left: Dr. Jessica Kramer, Jaewon Kang, Dr. CJ Liu, Seung Woo Hwangbo, Dr. Stefanie Bodison, Dr. Sherrilene Classen, Carlyn Ellison, and Isabella Wandenkolk. Not pictured: Raghuveer Chandrashekar*

## SERVICE

### SmartDriver Rehab Services - A Summer of Scholars



SmartDriver™ Rehab welcomed UF Geriatric Medicine Fellows Fallon Longmire, MD, and Christopher R. Buchanan, MD on July 7, 2022. The doctors participated in an overview of driver rehabilitation science and the SmartDriver™ program presented by Dr. Sherrilene Classen and Beth Gibson OTR/L, CDRS. Jason Rogers conducted a tour of the simulator lab and gave an overview of the universal design features incorporated in the Smart House. They participated in a Comprehensive Driving Evaluation

with a community-dwelling senior to round out their day. We hope this opportunity will lead to a better understanding of the driving needs of their future patients.

We were also very pleased to have UF OTD student Tiffany Knudtson, OTS for her first Level II internship. Tiffany spent the summer learning how to conduct clinical and on-road assessments and interventions. She was well received by our clients and became a valuable member of the SmartDriver Team.

*Pictured from left to right: Beth Gibson, Barbara DuPont, Dr. Fallon Longmire, Dr. Sherrilene Classen, Dr. Christopher R. Buchanan and Tiffany Knudtson, OTS*

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## OT EAC to Complete Relocation this Fall



The Occupational Therapy Equal Access Clinic has transitioned to a new student board. The new board has completed its first summer semester and provided four evaluations and eleven treatment sessions to community members seeking OT services. Currently, the student board is planning fundraising activities to support purchasing equipment for both the clinic and our clients with limited financial support. Additionally, the OT EAC is hosting a community outreach program to connect community members with adaptive devices that meet their daily needs. This fall, the OT EAC will be relocating to the Smart House, a fully functioning home that provides ample space and opportunity to implement occupation-based interventions

and assessments. The clinic will continue to provide onsite and telehealth services from this new location with support from UF OT faculty and community clinicians. The new space will allow the OT EAC to increase the number of services provided for our community and increase student involvement within the clinic.

*Back row left to right: Courtney Dougherty, Karen Bruchs, Morgan Pleasants, Dr. Anna Galloway, Gina Froehlich.  
Front row left to right: Madilyn Maschhoff and Sydney Mason*

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## ALUMNI NEWS

### Alumnus spotlight: Albert Daley, II, M.O.T. '17

Albert Daley II is an occupational therapist at UF Health with extensive experience in general medicine, pediatrics and intermediate care units. He received a Master of Occupational Therapy degree from the UF College of Public Health and Health Professions in 2017, and a Bachelor of Exercise Science and Health Promotion from Florida Atlantic University in 2014. He enjoys running, exploring nature trails and visiting all of Florida's beach towns.





Daley shares insights about his career journey, working in the field of occupational therapy and memories from his time as a student at UF.

### Why did you choose to pursue a career in occupational therapy?

My father was an occupational therapist, so I got to learn about the field from a very young age. I wanted to help people, and I remember thinking that this is a profession where people have gone through some sort of change, and our whole job is to let them know we

are going to do our best to get them back to independence and back to whatever it is that brings their life joy. Whatever it is they need to do to live their life to the fullest, we're going to help them get back there. As time went on, I saw that although occupational therapy is one profession, there are so many different routes you can take it in, whether you're talking about acute care (where I work), a rehab facility, outpatient, schools, etc. There are so many different ways you can take this career, and I knew one of those would be a good fit for me. [Read more...](#)



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