Program Development and Grant Writing in Occupational Therapy

MAKING THE CONNECTION

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Contents

	Foreword	**ix**
	Acknowledgments	**xi**
	Introduction	**xiii**
	Reviewer Recognition	**xv**
1	**Community Practice in Occupational Therapy: What Is It?**	**1**
	Overview	1
	Introduction	2
	What Is Community?	2
	Health in the Context of Community	3
	The Need for Community Practice	5
	Understanding Community Practice in Occupational Therapy	5
	The Roles of Occupational Therapy Practitioners in the Community	8
	Skills Required for Community Practice	10
	Models of Practice in the Community	12
	Public Health and Occupational Therapy	15
	Building Evidence in Community Practice	17
	Community-Based Participatory Research	18
	Challenges to Community Practice	18
	The Concept of Community Immersion	19
	The Concept of Partnership	20
	Application to the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework	22
	Conclusion	23
	Glossary	23
	References	23
2	**An Introduction to Program Development as a Foundation for Grant Writing**	**33**
	Overview	33
	Introduction	34
	Where Does the Occupational Therapy Practitioner Begin?	34
	Program Development	36
	Preplanning	36
	The Steps to Program Development	38
	Program Development and Grant Writing	49

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Conclusion 50
Glossary 50
References 51

3 Bringing an Idea to Life: Foundations for Program Development and Grant Writing 59

Overview 59
Introduction 59
Beginning with an Idea 60
Transforming an Idea into a Program 64
Exploring the Role of OT in Program Development and Grant Writing 65
Program Development as a Skill 69
Creating the Program Team 72
Where Do Grants Fit In? 75
Conclusion 75
Glossary 75
References 76

4 Finding a Grant That Fits 85

Overview 85
Introduction 86
The Language of Grants 86
Types of Grants 87
Grant Models 92
Grant Eligibility 94
Basic Principles of Grant Funding 96
Searching for Grants 101
Funding Agencies 101
Tips and Strategies for Finding the Just-Right Grant 105
How to Read an RFP 109
Grant Searching Strategies 109
Before Beginning to Write . . . 113
Conclusion 113
Glossary 114
References 115

5 Tips and Strategies for Writing a Successful Grant Proposal 125

Overview 125
Introduction 125
The Basics of Writing a Grant Proposal 126
General Tips for Writing a Successful Grant Proposal 128
Strategies for Maximizing Funding 132
Mistakes to Avoid 135
Submitting the Grant 137
The Review Process 138

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Conclusion 139
Glossary 139
References 139

6 Understanding the Community: A Necessary Step Before Grant Writing 147

Overview 147
Introduction 147
Community Capacity Building 148
Types of Community Capacity 152
Community Competency 153
A Strategy for Building Community Capacity: Community-Based Participatory Research 156
Community Capacity Building and Grant Writing 157
Conclusion 162
Glossary 162
References 163

7 Community Partnerships: A Key to Success 171

Overview 171
Introduction 171
Community Partnerships: Why They Matter 172
Establishing Partnerships 174
Community Involvement: Becoming a Part of the Partnership 175
Partnering with Community Stakeholders 176
Academic–Community Partnerships 178
Engaging the Community 179
Memorandums of Understanding 183
Challenges to Community Partnerships 183
Grants and Partnerships 188
Conclusion 189
Glossary 189
References 190

8 Piecing Together the Grant Proposal 199

Overview 199
Introduction 199
The Grant Writing Process 200
Components of a Grant Proposal 200
Title 202
Letter of Intent 202
Abstract 203
Cover Letter 205
Optional Components of Research and Program-Based Grants 206
Background 207
Problem Statement/Needs Statement 209

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Incorporating Capacity into the Background 210
Theoretical Foundation 211
Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Outcomes 211
Implementation Plan 215
Timeline 217
Evaluation Plan 217
Dissemination Plan 218
Budget 219
Project Team 238
References 238
Appendices 239
Developing a Logic Model 239
Institutional Review Boards 241
Grant Visuals 243
Conclusion 243
Glossary 244
References 244

9 Making a Case: Using Data to Maximize a Grant Proposal 259

Overview 259
Introduction 259
The Purpose of Data Gathering 260
Types of Data 261
Where to Find the Right Data 264
Challenges to Data Gathering 267
Strategies for Incorporating Data into a Grant Proposal 267
Conclusion 269
Glossary 269
References 269

10 Program Evaluation 277

Overview 277
Introduction 277
Need for Program Evaluation 278
Evaluation Methods: Internal vs. External Evaluation 280
Participatory Evaluation 282
Choosing an Evaluation Method 283
Types of Evaluation Data 283
Types of Evaluation Design 285
Techniques for Data Collection for an Evaluation Plan 287
Challenges to Evaluation Plans 288
Drafting the Evaluation Plan 290
An Evaluation Plan Model 293
Writing Up the Results 294

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Conclusion 296
Glossary 296
References 296

11 Sustainability 307

Overview 307
Introduction 307
What Is Sustainability? 308
The Importance of Sustainability 309
Strategies for Achieving Program Sustainability 310
Factors Influencing Sustainability Planning 315
Developing a Sustainability Plan: Things to Consider 319
Conclusion 321
Glossary 321
References 321

Index 333

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Foreword

This is the first time I have been asked to write a foreword for a book, and I am delighted for three main reasons. First, the book is written by one of my former occupational therapy students at the University of South Alabama. I knew her then as Joy Voltz, and I have followed her career in occupational therapy with great interest, pride, and admiration.

Secondly, I am even more pleased because she has chosen to write about community practice in occupational therapy, a topic near and dear to my heart. When I was an occupational therapy student at Virginia Commonwealth University, Dr. Gary Kielhofner nurtured my interest in community practice. Now I am thrilled to pass the torch to Joy. If in some small way I enhanced her attraction and commitment to community practice, I am honored.

Finally, the book itself is wonderful, academic, and well researched, as well as practical and useful. The book covers the nuts and bolts of community assessment, program development, grantwriting, and program evaluation. The content reflects the author's extensive experience in community-based practice and the available evidence in the literature. It provides practitioners and students alike with the knowledge and skills to develop, fund, and evaluate community-based occupation-based programs. This is important as the shift from hospital-based care to community-based care continues to grow. The federal government's health agenda, *Healthy People 2020,* is designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of Americans, and this text provides a blueprint for occupational therapy involvement in community and public health efforts.

The book is both scholarly and pragmatic, a difficult synthesis to achieve. I commend Joy Doll for her work on this text. It no doubt will further enhance the role and skills of current and future occupational therapy practitioners in community-based settings.

Marjorie E. Scaffa, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

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I would like to thank my parents for their ongoing support and belief in me no matter what. I also have to thank Mike for always believing in me no matter what happens and enduring my desire to be with people to better the world.

I would like to dedicate this book to the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, which has taught me the true meaning of community work and what it means to become part of a community. I also dedicate this book to John Penn, who taught me so much about grant writing and let me be a part of his team.

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Introduction

In recent years, the profession of occupational therapy has developed an interest in community practice, and although this area of practice is not well defined, it deserves to be supported and recognized. For occupational therapy practitioners working in community settings rather than in clinical care, the demands are different and unique skills are required for successful practice. The purpose of this book is to be a tool for community practitioners or for any practitioners or students interested in community work, whether full time or as a side project.

Tools for community practice include program development and grant writing. But beyond these, there are challenges in matching a program with a community for true success. This book not only addresses the skills needed for program development and grant writing but also explores successful and sustainable programming in community settings. Success and sustainability are not only tied to grant funding but truly require creative strategies, building on community capacity and buy-in from the people actually benefiting from the services. The components of program development and grant writing are not only for nontraditional practice, and it is my hope that clinicians in all settings will find this book relevant to practice, despite the context.

It is of importance to note that this book outlines strategies for success in community practice, but that each community and program is unique. What leads to success in one community may not do so in another. Occupational therapy practitioners working in the community must utilize their clinical reasoning skills to determine which strategies to apply to their community setting. Strategies for utilizing clinical reasoning in a community practice setting are emphasized throughout the text with case studies and process worksheets. These process worksheets are meant to help readers think through the processes for program development and grant writing in order to lay a foundation for development of occupational therapy practice in these areas.

Another important note to consider is that community practice is an ongoing lesson. Occupational therapy practitioners working in community settings have to be bold and creative in designing strategies. They must constantly reflect critically on the unique community needs to be able to modify the program as necessary. Critical self-reflection and program evaluation are

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key components. Similar to the model they use in traditional clinical settings, occupational therapy practitioners must be in constant evaluation mode and able to modify the program accordingly. Reflection and evaluation processes are emphasized throughout this book to facilitate the development of these tools for successful community-based practice.

This book focuses on capacity building as an approach to success in community practice. In community practice, needs—especially health-related ones—are often grossly evident and cannot be fully addressed. In the case of working with an underserved or health disparate community, needs can be overwhelming and leave one feeling helpless to address them. However, any community that faces challenges also has strengths that can be utilized to tackle community needs. Some examples include strong cultural ties, a powerful collective faith, and dependable leadership. These factors are the keys to a successful program, and this book focuses on approaches for building and using capacity to develop successful programs.

Healthcare professionals are generally viewed as experts in their practice area. However, in community practice, success relies on a partnership approach instead of an expert approach. This means that for occupational therapy practitioners success often results from being a part of the community and not viewed as outsider consultants. This book takes the approach of community partnership and promotes community immersion as a tactic for success. It is the author's belief and experience that this approach ensures that programs meet authentic needs and facilitate community change.

For occupational therapy practitioners working in community settings, program development and grant writing are a happy couple. Grant writing cannot occur without the process of comprehensive program development, and programs in community settings usually require external funding. In community settings, most grants are geared toward program implementation and program development is typically not supported by external funders. Although there are many resources available on grant writing techniques and strategies, for occupational therapy practitioners in community settings grant proposals are usually irrelevant without a strong program. Therefore, the purpose of this book is to provide a resource for the integration of grant writing and program development. For many community practitioners, these two aspects of community practice provide significant challenges and this book provides tools and strategies for success.

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