

Preparing for the Occupational Therapy Assistant National Board Exam

45 DAYS AND COUNTING

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"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:23

To Carey, the love and joy of my life, and my children Joseph Alan, Victoria Rose, and Michael Anthony, my three pieces of Heaven on Earth.

To my parents Vittorio and Rosina who came to this country and taught me about hard work and perseverance, and my sisters Josie and JoAnne who taught me how to be tough!

To my dear friend Charity Anderson Stein, who has taught me all I'll ever need to know about true friendship and what's most veraciously important in life.

Carpe Diem!

To past, current, and future students—may this book help you pass this exam, but more importantly, guide you on your journey as a tireless patient advocate and client-centered occupational therapist.

Rosanne DiZazzo-Miller

To Juliana—my best friend and one true love.

To my parents Patricia and Fred; my grandmother Zina; my good friend John; my mentors and role models Gary, Rita, Jane, Kornelia, and Mrs. Brown; and everyone that has inspired me.

To healthcare professionals who have dedicated their life to helping others.

Fredrick D. Pociask

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FOREWORD

“Never regard study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and to the profit of the community to which your later work belongs.”

Einstein

You survived your academic occupational therapy assistant program. You made it through field-work. You have dreamt about the day you would find out you were officially an occupational therapy assistant. You have longed to see yourself as a full member of this noble profession. Now, you are ready to embark on the final steps of your journey: The NBCOT COTA® certification exam.

Studying for the NBCOT® certification exam can feel like an overwhelming challenge. Like others in your shoes, you probably wonder: How do I begin? Where do I start? What do I do first? You are not alone. This book, *Preparing for the Occupational Therapy Assistant National Board Exam: 45 Days and Counting*, is more than a bank of multiple-choice questions or occupational therapy facts. It provides you with a plan and helps you organize your study by giving you an invaluable blueprint to guide you through the study process for the

examination—your last hurdle to gain before entry into the occupational therapy profession.

You will find that the format, organized around a 45-day plan, is designed to lower your stress level and keep you on-task. It provides you with a review of critical information using the latest terminology. The authors provide you with opportunities to process questions and apply step-by-step clinical reasoning skills to solve case studies—a critical part of the exam content. Journaling questions provide you with insight into areas that need priority for further study. Electronic access to over 750 exam questions adds to your experience, helping you to practice in the format of the exam and easing you into the process.

So, begin following this plan and apply what you know to how you think about the world as an occupational therapist. Your future in the occupational therapy profession awaits you *45 Days and Counting* . . .

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PREFACE

P*reparing for the Occupational Therapy Assistant National Board Exam: 45 Days and Counting* is a comprehensive overview for occupational therapy assistant students preparing to take the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (NBCOT COTA®) exam. It utilizes a health and wellness focus and includes tips and self-assessment forms to develop effective study habits. Unlike other occupational therapy assistant (OTA) examination review guides, *Preparing for the Occupational Therapy Assistant National Board Exam: 45 Days and Counting* provides a more structured and holistic approach, including a detailed calendar and plan of study for the 45 days leading up to the exam.

This text was written to address identified gaps with currently available board exam review textbooks as expressed by students and graduates from multiple institutions via direct contact, focus groups, and through consultation with OTA programs. The need for a comprehensive and holistic board exam preparation textbook, as well as a structured study plan and resources, was clearly identified as essential to best ensure successful completion of the NBCOT COTA® examination. In response, *Preparing for the Occupational Therapy Assistant National Board Exam: 45 Days and Counting* was specifically designed to offer OTA students and institutions an all-inclusive approach to board exam preparation.

Each chapter is broken down into manageable and organized topics designed to be completed 45 days preceding the examination. This text offers a simplified, yet extensive, review with a calendar to guide students through each day of preparation. Each chapter was created using references and resources utilized in OTA curricula throughout the United States. At the end of each chapter, there are self-study learning activities with

answers to check for knowledge and understanding. A journaling section includes questions using a reflective learning approach, where students learn individual areas to focus on and how to prioritize.

Furthermore, this text includes a special section for students who may find the NBCOT® exam challenging, in addition to advice from past students who had to re-take the exam, including words of encouragement.

Resources for Students

In addition to the features found within the text, the accompanying digital component includes TestPrep software that features over 750 NBCOT® style multiple-choice practice questions that have been reviewed and edited by item-writing specialists in healthcare science education. The software allows you to create your own practice exams using questions linked to specific chapters in the text, as well as to the four exam domains.

The digital component also contains six-option multiple-choice answer questions, which are new to the NBCOT COTA® exam.

Resources for Educators

For educators and academic programs, this text can be used in a dual role as a course-ready capstone textbook with instructor-only materials, in addition to a means to ensure adequate board exam preparation for students during the academic portion of their study. The instructor materials include classroom worksheets and study questions, laboratory guides, and learning activities, as well as slides in PowerPoint® format for each chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I (Rosanne) am a person of great faith and so before I go on about the many incredible individuals whom I would like to thank for making this book possible, I would first like to thank God for the gifts and opportunities I have been given. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to work with students, both those who have passed and those who may need additional help to pass this incredibly stressful and challenging examination. I continue to learn every day from them and try to apply that learning into projects like this to help others.

To my husband Carey, for putting up with far more than any spouse should have to put up with since my PhD defense gave us 1 week of normalcy before deadlines for this book began to take effect. To my children, Joseph, Victoria, and Michael, for always being there, whether they were asleep by my side or cheering me on. My hope is that they learn what hard work and dedication can accomplish. I would also like to acknowledge my parents, Vittorio and Rosina DiZazzo, who came to this country to make a better life for their children. It was not easy and they were not treated very well, but rather than making excuses or taking the easy way out, they persisted and ultimately lived the great American Dream. I am a product of that as first-generation born in this country and thank them every day for the lessons they have taught me about work ethic, kindness, and charity, and for their without-fail advice to “Work hard and keep your head down”—words that have indubitably provided guidance throughout many aspects of my life. To my sisters, Josie and JoAnne, their husbands, and my nieces and nephews for reminding me of the importance of family and laughter. To my dearest friend Charity: your free spirit and relentless support will always inspire me. I was heart-broken for your wonderful spirit to leave this world, but smile when I think what Heaven must be like now that you’re there!

This book would not be possible without the contributions and support of faculty and clinicians around the country who came together to provide a quality product that can support students in preparing for the ultimate challenge of their academics: passing the board examination. Thank you for your knowledge and expertise, for without them, this truly would not have been possible.

It means so much to have student input because they are ultimately the consumers of this endeavor. And so, to my incredible students—specifically the Wayne State

University 2013 and 2014 Directed Study groups who helped formulate and trial test questions, and my 2016 professional year 1 students who reviewed the chapters prior to print and provided feedback—I can’t thank you enough for taking part in this important project. A heartfelt thanks to Denise Rowe who read through the entire book and provided edits and suggestions from an exam candidate’s point of view. Thank you for your invaluable perspective and hard work. I can’t wait to support you with your first book!

I thank Joseph M. Pellerito, who coedited the companion text for occupational therapists with me. I will always remember and appreciate your mentoring and friendship throughout my years in academia.

Finally, to my coeditor Dr. Fredrick D. Pociask—my good friend and colleague—thank you for sharing your incredible knowledge and support with me and the many students who will benefit from our book. Your dry and sometimes questionable sense of humor has gotten me through many difficult times! A great many thanks to your wife Juliana, who endured many weeknight and weekend calls that would last hours on end in order to accomplish our goals—you are amazing and I so appreciate your support and kind heart.

Rosanne DiZazzo-Miller

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