

This session will explore:

The support that Practitioner's may require when supervising a disabled student with regard to 'Reasonable Adjustment'.



# Introductions.....

Laraine Epstein

Vicky Nolan

Rachel Booth



# The Plan of the Workshop

Dissemination of research  
Laraine Epstein

Interactive Discussions  
Vicky Nolan, Rachel Booth and Laraine Epstein

What next?  
Rachel Booth



## Part One: The research

**What support is required by practice  
Educators when supervising an  
Occupational Therapy student with a  
disability?**

**Laraine Epstein**



# Why this area of research?

Placement visit – Visiting Tutor

Student – Dyslexia

Educator needed support

Core skill of an O.T?



# What does the research say?

Equality Act (2010)

Research with students with disabilities is limited  
(Brown, James & Mackenzie 2006, Sivanesan  
2003, Simons 2010)

Disclosure - needs to occur to raise awareness with the  
educator that reasonable adjustments need to be made  
(Sivanesan 2003)

Students find it difficult and a challenge to declare their  
disability to their educator

(Velde, Chapin and Wittman 2005)



# What does the research say?

There is stigma attached to declaring a disability and there are concerns about discrimination (Simons 2010)

Students take into account the practice educators attitude and approach which is recommended to be a process of support, practical, sensitive, empathetic, helpful approach.

Velde, Chapin and Wittman 2005

Educators find it difficult knowing how to support students with Disabilities and are not able to assess the level of support required

(Awang & Taylor 2005, Simons 2010)



# Methodology

- Project Aim: A review of the levels of support – practice educators
- Emails - practice educators
- 15 expressions of interest
- 10 interviews – face to face/telephone  
2 face to face and 8 telephone
- Semi – structured interviews





# Theme 1

## The Practice Placement Environment

Student to be aware of the environment prior to Placement

Student to be aware of the challenges of the environment prior to placement

Practice setting needs to be appropriate for the student

Preparation prior to placement by Educator and Student



# Theme 2

## Prior Preparation

More support prior to placement (for educator)

Some idea of the challenges and issues may arise  
Easier to plan ahead

Disclosure – needed prior to placement!  
(The most important!)



# Theme 3

The Educator's requirements of the student:

Problem solving skills

To be open and honest

To disclose

Good communication



# Theme 4

## The requirements of the practice educator

Practice Educator confidence – own ability

Use OT Skills – Problem Solving

Find a suitable learning style for the student

Critical planning prior to placement



# Theme 5

## Support from the University

Would like them 'to be there' when issue arises

Would like them be in the background

Know the support is there – So do not have to worry

Clear lines of communication with university/contactable

Conflict: **Support with adjustments that are 'reasonable'**

**No support needed**



# Reactions/Attitudes Summary

Treat a student with a disability like any other student

Fear of taking a student with a disability

Reaction from service users to the student

Positive – service user and student - rapport

Negative – they just stared



# Summary

Educators said positive experience – Learnt from it

All team worked well to adapt to changes

Why should the student with the disability  
be treated any differently?

Depends upon the disability and the environment!



What next!  
Change attitudes! – Chip away at it

Next steps:

- Disseminate OT Conferences
- Phd





# References

- Awang D & Taylor C (2005) Professional placements and disabled students. How prepared are you? *International Journal of Therap* 12- 11
- Brown K, James C Mackenzie L (2006) The Practice Placement Education Experience: an Australian Pilot Study Exploring the Perspectives of Health Professional Students with a Disability 69(1)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-employers/the-duty-to-make-reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-people/>

- Simons M (2010) A procedure for providing advice and support for nurses with a disability. *British Journal of Nursing* 19-11
- Sivanesan N (2003) The Journey of a Visually Impaired Student becoming an Occupational Therapist *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* 66(12)
- Valde, B Chapin M Wittman P (2005) Working Around 'It' The Experience of Occupational Therapy Students with a Disability *Journal of Allied Health* 34:83-89



# Part Two

Lets discuss.....

The student with a disability on placement  
and what is meant by a reasonable  
adjustment?



# Definition - Reasonable adjustment

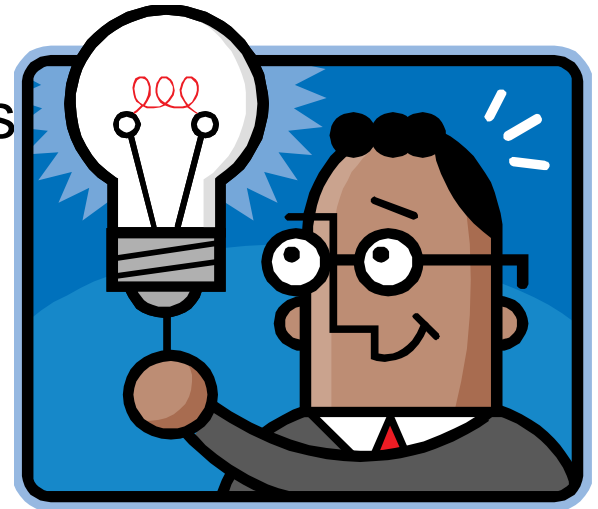
Reasonable adjustment as a reasonable step taken to prevent a disabled person suffering a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled.

(Equality and Human Rights Commission 2014)



# Examples / Scenarios

- A student with a visual or hearing impairment
- A student with dyslexia
- A student who has rheumatoid arthritis
- A student with depression
- A student who uses a wheelchair



# Supporting students with reasonable adjustments?

What support did you offer the student prior to the placement?

What support did the student receive during the placement?

What support did you offer the student following the end of their placement?

Who supported you through this process?



# Reasonable Adjustment – some examples

Extension of length of placement : Same hours over longer period

Fatigue management strategies: pacing, incorporating rest periods into day, regular breaks, use wheeled case

Awareness of triggers for anxiety: pre plan strategies for support

Pre placement visit with educator and university tutor

External support – university and disability office



# References

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/equal-rights/disability/disability-employment/work-making-reasonable-adjustments> accessed 21.10.2014



# Part Three

## Rachel Booth – What next?

### **Frist what is out there? Already**

- COT have a discussion forum on their web site –members only
- There are OT's with Disabilities who blog
- In the past there has been OT with disabilities fringe meetings at COT conference
- There are a number of Facebook groups
  - **Dyslexia4OT**
  - **OT's With Disabilities**
- **Most of theses are aimed at the person with the disability**





# Part Three

## Rachel Booth – What next?

**In your groups discuss these questions**

How can Occupational Therapists communicate via a social media network?

Is this secure?

Would you use a online Discussion forum?

If so what would you like to see on the discussion forum?  
Think about the format educators and/or students sections.

