

NEWSLETTER



LSBU
OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY SOCIETY

A Monthly Newsletter by the
LSBU Occupational Therapy Society

IN THIS EDITION....

- Upcoming events
- Placement during COVID
- Craft and Chat
- Role of OT in palliative care
- OT Conference events



“This month's top
recommendation

*OT& Chill podcast
episode 31:
"Use of Humour in
Occupational
Therapy"*

EDITORIAL

We welcome back all the students who has just completed their placement (1st or 2nd placement). No doubt it has been nerve wracking being on placement during this COVID-19 period.

This month's edition focuses on students' experiences during the pandemic. You'll read about experiences working in **HIV Neurocognitive Rehabilitation hospital**, **Remote placement**, **Elderly care unit**, **Pastoral care offered to student**.

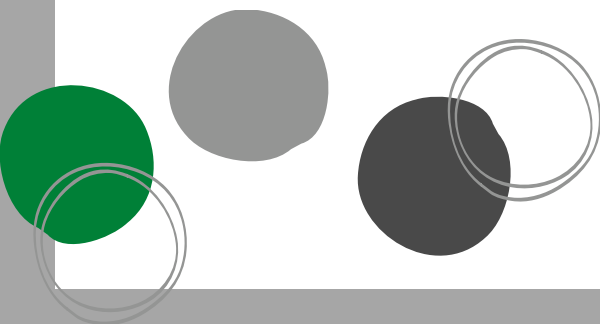
Also featuring is the wellbeing platform, **Craft and Chat** and reflection on **Role of OT in palliative care**.

Abi Odufisan
Newsletter editor



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March Journal Club**- 4th March
- Stay tuned for more! Keep an eye on emails, social media, and our [Eventbrite page](#)



STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PLACEMENT DURING COVID

HIV Neurocognitive Rehabilitation Hospital,

When my placement was cancelled one week before starting, I initially was stressed, uncertain and concerned my progression on the course would be impacted. However, it turned out to be the best thing that could have happened! I began my placement one week later in a HIV Neurocognitive Rehabilitation Hospital, a truly unique placement setting. Here I was able to learn about the value of Occupational Therapy when working with patients on the HIV and Homeless Pathway during Covid-19 and how it comes with its own set of challenges not seen in other placement settings. This has shown me to always make the most of opportunities that arise and not to dwell on the experiences we think we've lost!



-Becca Downing

Remote placement



I'm a second year PgDip student and have just completed a virtual placement with Guy's and St Thomas' orthopaedic team. I have a long-term health condition that I'm on immunosuppressant treatment for and am classed as clinically vulnerable to COVID-19. When the university first told me they were exploring the possibility of a remote placement I really wasn't keen on the idea. Having been basically shielding for the majority of the year, and doing uni online since March 2020, I was really looking forward to going 'out' on placement in January.

Some aspects of the placement that worked well were doing it alongside another student, the peer support was motivating and necessary for learning and to gain that sense of team working while working from home. Having a platform like Microsoft Teams to work on was key, I'm not sure it would have worked otherwise, and big bonus for us was having a practice educator also working remotely so there was lots of time to meet as a mini team and discuss learning and issues or questions arising from patient contact.

The nature of the placement allowed for lots of independence and autonomy and some of the work we did included calling patients to carry out initial assessments as part of the elective orthopaedic pre-assessment process, presenting virtual 'hip school' to patients on a platform similar to Zoom, liaising with adult social care from other boroughs and families to assist with discharge planning for patients on the trauma ward and developing a virtual falls prevention service.

STUDENTS EXPERIENCES OF PLACEMENT DURING COVID

Overall, my placement experience was really positive, and the team were very friendly and welcoming. I am grateful the placement team were able to source a remote placement within an established service and I was able to get my PP2 hours. I think this model of placement has the potential to be even more successful now that there is an existing experience to evaluate and compare to, and as the COVID pressures ease on hospitals.

- Zoe Collins

Experience of pastoral care on placement – working as part of a neuro surgical team:

I felt assured by the level of pastoral care the trust education team and my practice educator provided, which helped put me at some ease throughout my placement. This started with a weeklong online training course on various aspects of COVID, from knowing how to prone, how to don the correct PPE and the rules around providing basic lifesaving. We were further offered a two-weekly Reflective and Pastoral Care session with other AHPs, this enabled you to share your experiences, learn from others and participate in a very specific support network.

I was nervous before starting my placement, not knowing what to expect or what I might observe, therefore, these services provided a safe space to talk and ensured my confidence throughout the placement in such unprecedented times. I may have been very fortunate to work within this trust and feel so supported, however, I do think it's key, where possible, to have strong pastoral services for all students, not just through a pandemic but at all times. It can be daunting for any student to go on placement and the unknown can make this even tougher. My overall experience of placement was positive, although some of the service had altered and there was often redeployment of staff, however, this reflected how adaptable and resilient the staff are, reflecting some of the core proficiencies required to practice as an AHP.



- Marie Weissberg

COVID-19, Occupation and Identity

It had been over a year since our first placement, so with 10 months of online learning under our belts and a pandemic thrown into the mix, starting PP2 just as the country was experiencing the highest daily death toll at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, was overwhelming to say the least. A friend told me it was a 'baptism of fire', which I guess it was; but for many students training to be healthcare professionals at this time, our experiences in services bearing the brunt of the pandemic may be some of the most formative months of our careers.

STUDENTS EXPERIENCES OF PLACEMENT DURING COVID

I was based on an Elderly Care Unit at a London hospital that had been turned into a COVID-19 ward; then admitting patients of all ages suffering the debilitating impacts of this complex disease. During my first week, there were on average 3 deaths per day, which for a ward made up of 28-beds was pretty sobering.

In the same way that the first lockdown gave me personal insight into what it was like to be deprived of certain occupations, the experience of working on a COVID-19 ward gave me perspective on the ways in which a prolonged period of hospitalisation can change and effect an individual's occupational identity. Many of the patients who I worked with had previously been fully independent, yet the symptoms that they were experiencing meant that they had become deconditioned and were no longer able to perform tasks independently. This change in function inhibited their ability to engage in occupations that were meaningful to them and that reinforced their sense of self.

One patient particularly resonated with me; a woman who had been intubated in intensive care for over a month and came onto the ward as a step-down patient. We had conversations with her to help set some goals, yet when asking her what she wanted to do, she expressed that she was dreaming of shaving her legs and plucking her eyebrows! Although this could be perceived as a superficial act, this small self-care task reinforced the patient's identity and self-image, making her feel better and therefore positively impacted her health and wellbeing. Having plucked eyebrows and shaved legs made the patient feel like herself again; no longer a COVID-19 patient dependent on others to help her move up and down her bed after spending weeks in hospital.



I don't believe that this change in occupational identity and shift from independence to dependence for individuals who spend prolonged periods of time in hospital is something unique to COVID-19, yet the sheer volume of individuals who were experiencing this change was stark. In the same way that the first lockdown enhanced my belief in the beneficial impact of participation in occupations on my own health and wellbeing, the biggest lesson that I learnt from PP2 was that the occupations that we do in our daily lives, however big or small help give us our identities, and without them we can end up feeling lost.

- Jessie Padfield

2nd year PG Dip Occupational Therapy

If you signed up for any of our Annual Conference 2021 events we would love to hear your thoughts via short survey which you can access [here](#).

Please submit your responses by **Monday 29th March 2021**.

We would still like to hear from you even if you were unable to attend the event(s) you signed up for, just go straight to Q4.

Craft and chat

Like most people, when COVID hit this year, my PBL* group and I really missed seeing each other in person. My group know I'm obsessed with knitting and crochet and, after I mentioned doing an online craft group, they wanted to know when it was going to start! And so.....Craft and Chat was born! We decided to meet on Sundays at 3pm via Zoom and bring any craft we were working on or just bring ourselves. Next, the whole year was invited.

There was no agenda or anything formal. Yet, the chance to meet up and talk about uni or not talk about uni whilst doing craft quickly became a lovely rest point in the week when life was otherwise crazy and uncertain. As the weeks went on with no sign of returning to normality, I found it so helpful to know when I was going to see my uni friends separately from lectures and PBL



Chatting to those that come regularly, coming up for a year later, we all still value that space in the week where we can chat about whatever we want to whilst doing something and not awkwardly staring at the screen! As OTs, we spend so much of our time thinking about helping others that we can forget to get to some occupational balance and take time and space for ourselves. Whatever that is for you, I'd encourage you to get some uni friends together on Zoom, focus on something you all like and see where it takes you. If we want to be able to look after others, we need to look after ourselves!

*PBL stands for "Problem-Based Learning". This is a small group based learning method used throughout the PGDip/MSc Occupational Therapy course at LSBU.



Created by the lovely Liz Banks

ROLE OF OT IN PALLIATIVE CARE

By Joyce Mutoko

Reflections on a training session on palliative occupational therapy

The role of the OT in specialist palliative care is to act in an adversary capacity rather than care for the patient, which means treating the patient in a holistic way and helping them during the last days or months of life. The purpose of this is to achieve either a preferred place of death or care when they get discharged from the hospital. They also help the family in the grieving process during the transition and after the patient has passed away. The training also mentioned Fast track which is a service for rapidly deteriorating patients. It's a continuing care assessment which consists of an appropriate care and support package which is implemented as soon as possible. OT role with palliative patients includes having a discussion with patients on discharge destinations, conducting functional assessments if able, providing equipment if needed and completing fast track application.

The pandemic has further amplified the importance of promoting quality of life in a holistic way by providing good end of life care for patients and their families. The palliative OT spoke about how you get one chance to get it right for a patient, the importance of having difficult conversations with patients, and sensitively communicating their wishes during the final stage of illness.

When having discussions about end-of-life plans with patients asking patients what they know about their illness may sometimes be a starting point of opening up difficult conversations with patients. It also demonstrates the importance of having honest conversations about goals of care so that therapists are able to personalise care and support for patients during the last months/ year or day of their life (Association for Palliative Medicine, 2020).

Occupational therapy is a holistic and person-centred profession, ensuring that patients are involved in as much as possible within their care. This is especially true when it comes to decisions on their treatment and care, offering patients a meaningful death is important for their sense of dignity and autonomy. As Covid patients can often deteriorate quickly the opportunity for such discussions can sometimes be lost or limited, but it's still important to make sure patients are involved as much as possible with planning.

This training has highlighted the lack of training received at university to prepare students on having difficult conversations with patients and topics such as palliative care and end of life. As highlighted in the training you get one chance to get it right for patients. There is a fear of upsetting patients and their relatives by saying the wrong thing, but also an anxiety to manage my own emotions.



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FIRST YEAR
REP

Wellbeing top tips:
Access a Google doc on wellbeing during the pandemic (created by LSBU OT students) [here](#).

We take pride in our chosen career, our course, and our university. This programme would not be possible without you; the members. The society was created by students, for students, and this is the core of its ethos. We hope that all members feel part of the OT society community.

To join the OT Society for 2020-21, please visit our website:

<https://www.lsbu.org/societies/lbuotsociety/>
you will need to log in to the website to buy your membership.

SOCIAL MEDIA!

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Email us on:






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Visit the OT society website!

Our society aim

Welcome to the occupational therapy society, a student-led, inclusive, fun and educational group. People from all backgrounds and academic disciplines are invited (not just OT!). We'll be working hard to ensure our members still get great virtual events that are useful, interesting, relevant, and engaging!

Why join LSBU OT Soc?

-  Award winning annual conference
-  CPD opportunities
-  Academic events - talks, workshops, Journal Club
-  Social events
-  Regular newsletter and updates
-  OT Week 2020
-  Interdisciplinary events