



# OT 24 Hour Virtual Exchange

October 29/30/31

[Depending on where you are]

## Exploring Balance



**Cathy Ormston** has spent most of her career working in a range of mental health services in Northern England. She has been leader of occupational therapy for three different health Trusts over the past 20 years, and been an active member of the COT specialist section (mental health) previously as a committee member, in the development of *Recovering Ordinary Lives*, and as an editorial board member for their mental health publication. Cathy is the Trust Professional Lead for Occupational Therapy for Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust where she has made it a priority to support occupational therapists' practice through encouragement to underpin their practice from a strong base in occupational science, and building therapists' confidence to assert peoples' rights to have occupational needs identified and addressed.

### ***Staying Precious About Occupation!***

*Reflections on the why - and the how – mental health occupational therapists can continue to practice with occupation at the centre of their work.*

Pressure on occupational therapists to work generically is well described and long noted (Harries & Gilhooly 2003; Lloyd & King 2004; Craik et al 2008). So when UK occupational therapists were urged through *Recovering Ordinary Lives* (COT's ten year strategy for occupational therapy in mental health) to work to ensure that "by 2017 occupation will be seen as a human right and occupational deprivation as a violation of human rights" (COT 2006), it was both timely and desirable to examine the extent to which occupational therapists were focussing their efforts on identifying, assessing and addressing service users' occupational needs, and look at ways to boost occupation-focussed practice.

The presenter will reflect on why occupational therapists can become diverted from their core contributions to addressing mental health problems, and why service users benefit when they return to specialist, occupation-focussed practice. She will describe some experiences regarding boosts and barriers to making occupation 'precious' again, provide examples of how leadership can impact on the refocusing of occupational therapy practice, and share some success stories .

The session will encourage you to be bold in your own assertions of occupation as a human right!

Refs:

COT (2006) *Recovering Ordinary Lives- The strategy for occupational therapy in mental health services 2007–2017* College of Occupational Therapists accessed from <http://www.cot.co.uk/sites/default/files/publications/public/ROL-Vision-2010.pdf>

Craik C Chacksfield J D Richards G (2008) *A Survey of Occupational Therapy Practitioners in Mental Health* <http://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/2871/3/Survey+of+occupational+therapy+practitioners+in+mental+health+.pdf>

Harries P Gilhooly K (2003) *Generic and Specialist Occupational Therapy Casework in Community Mental Health Teams* *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* March 2003 66(3)

Lloyd C King R McKenna K (2004) *Generic versus specialist clinical work roles of occupational therapists and social workers in mental health.* *Aust N Z J Psychiatry.* Mar;38(3):119-24