

Ethics Applications in Occupational Therapy

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Like all professionals, occupational therapists have to practice ethical behavior in their work. They need to display a non-discriminatory attitude, treat clients with respect, and encourage collaboration, inclusion, and fairness. Moreover, they should avoid plagiarism in writing their ethics applications. According to Tomasello (2018), human morality is shaped by the concepts of right and wrong (p.667). Although abstract concepts are not always easy to understand, occupational therapists should find support for their moral decisions in the AOTA Code of Ethics, the most reliable guide in such matters.

Plagiarism is always unethical, even if it is unintentional. The Code of Ethics clearly states that any plagiarism is strictly forbidden (American Occupational Therapy Association, [AOTA], 2018a, p. 1). Two of the most frequent errors made by occupational therapists are the following: (1) assuming that information is common knowledge and not giving credit to the author, and (2) assuming that material found on the internet is in the public domain and that copyrights do not apply. According to Joob and Wiwanitkit (2018), "any degree of plagiarism is plagiarism and is unethical" (p.151). Overall, practitioners have to be careful when they include materials from the internet and must always acquire the author's permission to use them. In addition, they should seek to become culturally more effective.

Cultural effectiveness is an understanding of the fact that people are different and that they should not be judged based on those differences. Occupational therapists have to respect and treat every human being equally, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender (AOTA, 2018b, pp. 2-3). They have to transcend their personal beliefs and attitudes and create a collaborative relationship with their clients. Understanding cultural differences helps people to build tolerant and respectful attitudes (Serin, 2017, p.175).

Occupational therapists have to be tolerant not only with their patients, but also with their colleagues. Code of Ethics standards explain that occupational therapy professionals should approach patients and coworkers with respect and integrity.

Tolerance, respect, and integrity are necessary professional traits in a diverse, contemporary society. Occupational therapists must ensure that they treat both their colleagues and clients with fairness despite cultural differences. Moreover, respect and fairness require honesty; therefore, plagiarism should never be present in professional work. Whenever dilemmas and complex decisions arise, the AOTA Code of Ethics should be used as a reliable tool for practitioners.

References

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