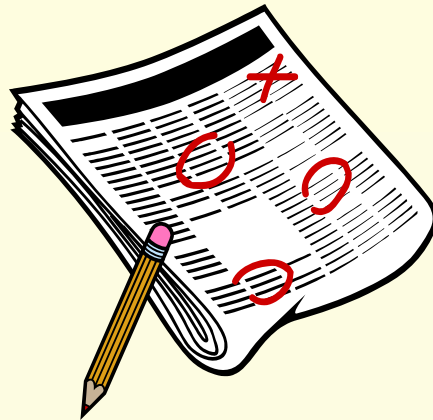


HOW TO LAND YOUR FIRST JOB- FROM A TO Z



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WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- What kind of practice setting makes me:
 - *Feel good about what I am doing*
 - *Feel as if I am making a difference*
 - *Excited about all the possibilities*



WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- Know your own needs
 - How much supervision do I need or want?
 - Am I confident & competent enough to work solo?
 - Do I need opportunities to bounce ideas off another OT practitioner?
 - Do I require encouragement or reinforcement in my clinical decision making?





WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- **Fully explore the practice environment for a “good fit”**
 - **Does it match my skills?**
 - **Does it match my interests?**
 - **Does it stimulate me intellectually?**
 - **Will I need to “stretch”?**

WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- **How important is the \$\$\$**

- Does \$\$ outweigh other considerations?



- Is a big sign on bonus worth being in a setting that is not a good “match” for me?

- Should I keep looking for \$\$ + “fit” ?

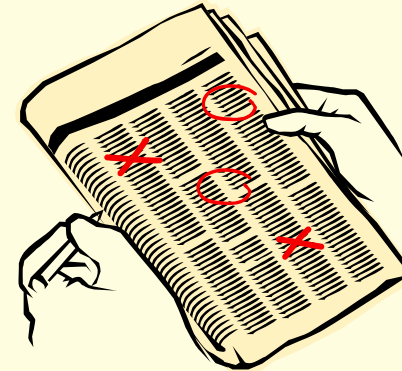
KNOW YOUR PERSONAL PRIORITIES

- New adventure vs. comfortable
- Close to home or ready to fly!
- Large department vs. smaller setting
- Work – play balance
- Pay – benefits
 - Time off



WHERE TO LOOK FOR A JOB

- Newspaper classified section
- OT Specific Magazines
 - *OT Practice*
 - *Advance for Occupational Therapists*
- On-Line
 - OTJobLink
 - Monster.com
- Talk to other therapists/networking
- State Association web sites





THIS JOB SOUNDS INTERESTING

- **Call for additional information**
- **Have a list of questions, be concise**
 - **Location of job**
 - **Hiring new graduates?**
- **Fax, send or e-mail resume**



COVER LETTER

- **Brief**
- **State your objective**
- **State your **unique** qualifications for the job**
- **State a specific reason why you are interested in this particular job**
- **Use spell/grammar check!**



Resume

- **2 pages max**
- **Education & degrees earned**
- **Fieldwork Level I and / or II**
 - **List any advanced learning experiences or skill set**
 - **List any specific standardized assessments utilized**
- **List prior work experience**



Resume

- List **special skills** (e.g. foreign language; ASL)
- List any awards or publications
- List related volunteer experiences
- List any leadership experiences or participation in professional organizations



SCHEDULING THE INTERVIEW

- **Phone Etiquette:**
 - Call from a phone that has clear reception
 - Don't call or leave messages from a speaker phone
 - Don't call from a cell phone with background noises
 - Be sure to thank the person for taking the time to talk with you and leave them knowing you are looking forward to the interview.



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- **Do your homework – demonstrate you know something about this facility / company / setting**
- **Brush up on specific interventions relative to the setting**
- **Brush up on type of clients most likely to be seen in this setting**
- **Be prepared to discuss any related experiences you have had**



HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- Arrive 15 minutes early for the interview.
- You may have an application to fill out.
- Make eye contact.
- Greet the office staff and others warmly.
- Dress professionally, yet be true to your personality.

HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- Do not chew gum or suck on lozenges – can be distracting to interviewer



- Turn off your cell phone!



- Be yourself. Remember you are interviewing them too.

HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- **SMILE**
- **Maintain good posture**
- **Show your passion for occupational therapy!!**
- **Articulate why you want this specific job**



HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- You need to stand apart from the rest of the interviewees – “*stand out from the herd*”



- Attitude is as important as aptitude

INTERVIEWS: WHAT I'LL ASK/TELL YOU

- My philosophy and style
- Problem solving/reasoning skills
 - Tell me about a difficult situation....solve problem



INTERVIEWS: WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED

- Strengths & areas for improvement
- Special skills
- Your own personal & professional goals





INTERVIEWS: WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED

- Learning style/environment for learning
- Interpersonal style: what are your hot buttons?
- What do you do for fun?
- What will you bring to this job?
- Why should I hire you?

INTERVIEWS: WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK ME

- Meeting with staff/observation time
- What is a typical day?
- Productivity expectations
- How do you deal with fluctuating caseloads/staffing?



MORE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

- What is the orientation process?
- What are the company's expectation of an entry level therapist?
- What are the opportunities for career growth



MORE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

- **Supervision: how often and by whom?**
- **Is mentoring available?**
- **Performance review process and raises (ask to see a copy of the performance evaluation form)**
- **Dress code?**
- **When will you make your decision?**



ASK ABOUT THE PERKS

- **Support for continued professional development**
 - Learning community with other staff
 - Setting based CE / in-services
 - Is CE funded?
 - When does an employee become eligible?



**APPROVED PROVIDER of
CONTINUING EDUCATION**

by The American Occupational
Therapy Association, Inc.

ASK ABOUT THE PERKS

- Support for AOTA & / or state membership
- Support to take an active role in professional organizations
- Support for Board or Specialty certification



- Support for advancing academic education

ASK ABOUT THE BENEFITS

- Health care



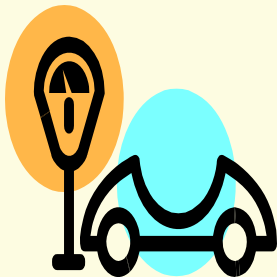
- Retirement plan
 - 401K (matched by company?)



- Vacation – maintain occupational balance!!

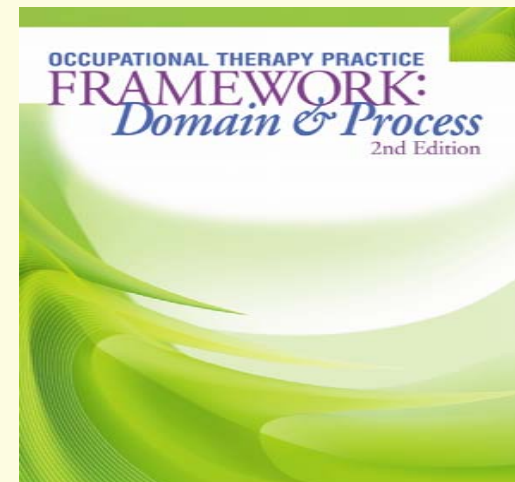
ASK ABOUT THE BENEFITS

- **Paid time off (sick, holiday, vacation)**
- **Others (health club subsidy, parking)**



Be Observant

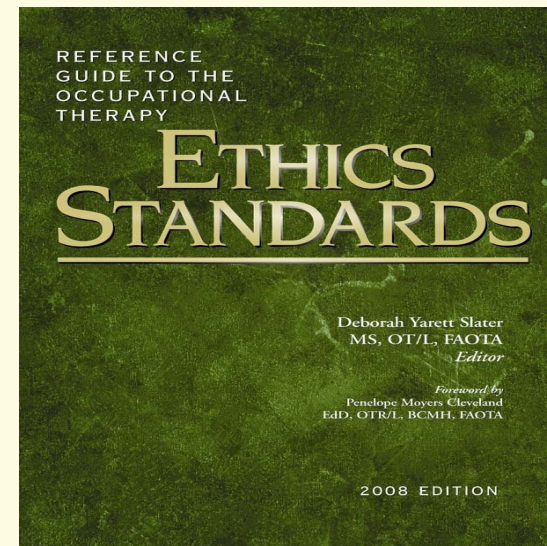
- Fully explore the environment for a “good fit”
 - How do practitioners use evidence in their everyday practice?
 - Are interventions you observe occupation based?





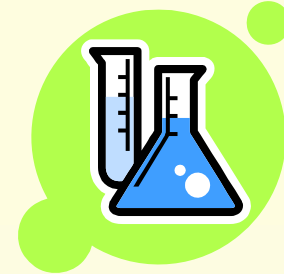
THINK ABOUT....

- Confidentiality
- Professional conduct
- Ethics
 - the organizational culture
 - my values



REFLECTIONS POST INTERVIEW

- **Chemistry with supervisor is critical**
 - Trust your gut about this
- **Did other practitioners appear professional & collegial**
- **What did client – therapist interactions look like?**
- **Environment – is there room for some fun!**





FOLLOW UP POST INTERVIEW

- **Send a hand written note thanking the employer for the opportunity to interview.**
 - **Include others who were part of the interview process**
- **Don't send an e-mail thank-you.**
- **Don't leave a message on voice mail as a thank-you.**



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: INPATIENT SETTINGS

- **Priority is medical management**
- **OT Role: recommendations for future care**
- **Comfort level with high tech equipment and chaotic environment**
- **Flexibility and creativity to deal with interruptions & provide intervention**
- **High level of “medical” knowledge & interest**



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES

- **Rehabilitation vs. maintenance patients**
- **Productivity issues**
- **Supervision expectations (OTAs, Aides, you!)**
- **Groups vs. individual treatment**
- **Regulatory issues**
- **Family interactions**



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: OUTPATIENT CLINICS

- **Hospital-based vs. free-standing clinics**
- **Role of the business office**
 - **Visit limits**
 - **Coding/reimbursement rules**
 - **Scheduling**
 - **Precertification/recertification**
- **Scheduling: cancellations/no-shows**
- **Documentation time**



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: OUTPATIENT CLINICS

- **Productivity and intervention models**
- **Supervision & staff coverage**
 - **PT and OT are NOT interchangeable!**
- **ADL/IADL training challenges**
- **Home programs**



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: COMMUNITY BASED SETTINGS

- **May need to be an advocate for occupational therapy role**
- **May have much more interaction with various publics & decision makers**
- **Practice may be more independent than in a facility**
- **Team members are likely to be other disciplines**




SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: COMMUNITY BASED SETTINGS

- **Salary and other funding often based on grants which may not be consistent**
- **May be highly dependent on state/federal policy and legislative initiatives**
- **Needs assessment and marketing of services/outreach may be important part of the job**
- **May need to seek supervision and collegial support outside of the job**

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: PEDIATRICS

- Work in teams- potential for blurring of roles and sharing of knowledge and expertise
- Consultative model
- Families are also the clients
- Need for differing documentation styles depending on the setting:
 - medically necessary to educationally related to family driven/family friendly outcomes





Special Considerations for Solo Practitioners

- Use technology to receive mentoring
- Locate your own group of colleagues in the vicinity for discussions
- Utilize AOTA / State resources
- Make use of on line communities
 - OTConnections
 - LinkedIn



At the End of the Day

- You at the beginning of an exciting, rewarding life long career
- Anything is possible
- Occupational Therapy is a proud profession and you are part of it!



CONTACT ME

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