

Project Title	Developing and maintaining professional identity when working in a non-profession specific mental health role: A scoping review
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Lead discipline (please select one)

- Nursing
- Allied Health
- Medicine
- Pre-clinical

- Health Economics
- Biostatistics
- Value-based Healthcare
- Epidemiology

Outline of the project

Background:

Occupational therapists (OTs) working in mental health settings can face a number of challenges to their professional identity, including: working in case management roles where they need to balance generic and discipline specific work (Lloyd, King & Ryan 2007); working in teams where they are isolated from other OTs (Xyrichis & Ream 2008); and a perceived lack of respect from other disciplines for occupation-based practice (Hayes et al. 2008; Rodger et al. 2009; Scanlon et al. 2010). These challenges can result in difficulty recruiting and retaining staff in mental health settings and it is therefore important to identify strategies to support professional identity (Ashby et al. 2013). This project will review the literature to identify strategies that can be used in the Mental Health, Justice Health, and Alcohol and Drug Services (MHJHADS) division to support professional identity.

Research question:

What strategies can be used to support the development of professional identity for occupational therapists working in mental health?

References:

Ashby, S.E., Ryan, S., Gray, M. & James, C. (2013). Factors that influence the professional resilience of occupational therapists in mental health practice, *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 60, 110-119.

Hayes, R., Bull, B., Hargreaves, K. & Shakespeare, K. (2008). A survey of recruitment and retention issues for occupational therapists working clinically in mental health. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 55 (1), 12–22.

Lloyd, C., King, R. & Ryan, L. (2007). The challenge of working in mental health settings: Perceptions of newly graduated occupational therapists. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 70 (11), 460-470.

Rodger, S., Thomas, Y., Holley, S., Springfield, E., Edwards, A., Broadbridge, J. et al. (2009). Increasing the occupational therapy mental health workforce through innovative practice education: A pilot project. [Research]. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 56 (6), 409–417.

Scanlon, J., Still, M., Stewart, K. & Croaker, J. (2010). Recruitment and retention issues for occupational therapists in mental health: Balancing the pull and the push. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 57 (2), 102–110.

Xyrichis, A. & Ream, E. (2008). Teamwork: A concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 61, 232-241.

Proposed research methods

- A scoping review of the peer review and grey literature investigating the research question.
- Consultation with occupational therapists working in MHJHADS about how the identified strategies could be implemented/ supported within MHJHADS.

Preferred study discipline being undertaken by the student

Allied Health - Occupational Therapy

Potential benefits to the student and to the department

Project deliverables:

- A document summarising the review, recommending approaches that can be used in MHJHADS to support the development of professional identity for occupational therapists.
- A one-page summary of the importance of professional identity and strategies for supporting the development of professional identity. This summary will be included with information provided to new occupational therapists starting in MHJHADS.

The above deliverables will enable the MHJHADS Office of the Director of Allied Health to support the development of professional identity for occupational therapy staff.

The student will have the opportunity to develop their skills in reviewing peer-reviewed and grey literature, as well as contextualising the review findings through consultation with staff to develop recommendations. The topic of professional identity may also prompt the student to consider the development of their own professional identity as they commence their career as an occupational therapist.

Department within ACT Health Directorate / Canberra Health Services where the student will be based

Office of the Director of Allied Health, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services (MHJHADS)

Please submit form to preclinical.research@act.gov.au