



Short –Term Mobility Week Occupational Therapy on the Edge

November 6-8, 2019

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

Occupational Therapy was developed as a profession to build bridges between society and the groups which were excluded or living on the margins. The history of Occupational Therapy dates back to Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago and the Moral Treatment movement in mental health. Hull House was a centre set up to attempt to bridge the gap between middle-class and the poor through providing education, crafts and skills training. The population served was largely immigrant, new arrivals to America. The foundations, established by Jane Addams call for three R's: residence, research and reform, which allowed for these creators of Occupational Therapy to make meaningful and long-lasting change through advocacy efforts supported by research on the ground. This history shows that advocating for marginalized groups is at the core foundation of our profession.

"close cooperation with the neighborhood people, scientific study of the causes of poverty and dependence, communication of these facts to the public, and persistent pressure for [legislative and social] reform..." (Wade, 1967). – Quote from Jane Addams on the aim of Hull House

Over the years, the profession of OT begin to grow more in the medical world, with a focus on the individual. Many professionals are concerned that this shift has left some of the marginalized groups behind. By moving more towards the individual in the hospital setting, we are in danger of moving away from our role as an advocate for and with groups in our communities. Today there are a growing number of OT's who are critically examining the profession of OT and how we can return to our roots with a focus on the groups who are living at the margins of our society.

This week will allow us to move "to the edge". We will explore the role of OT with marginalized groups through hearing stories from experts working in this field. As well, we will explore the role of OT's as advocates and will focus on how you, as future occupational therapists, can start now to act as advocates for and with the groups in society who need it the most.