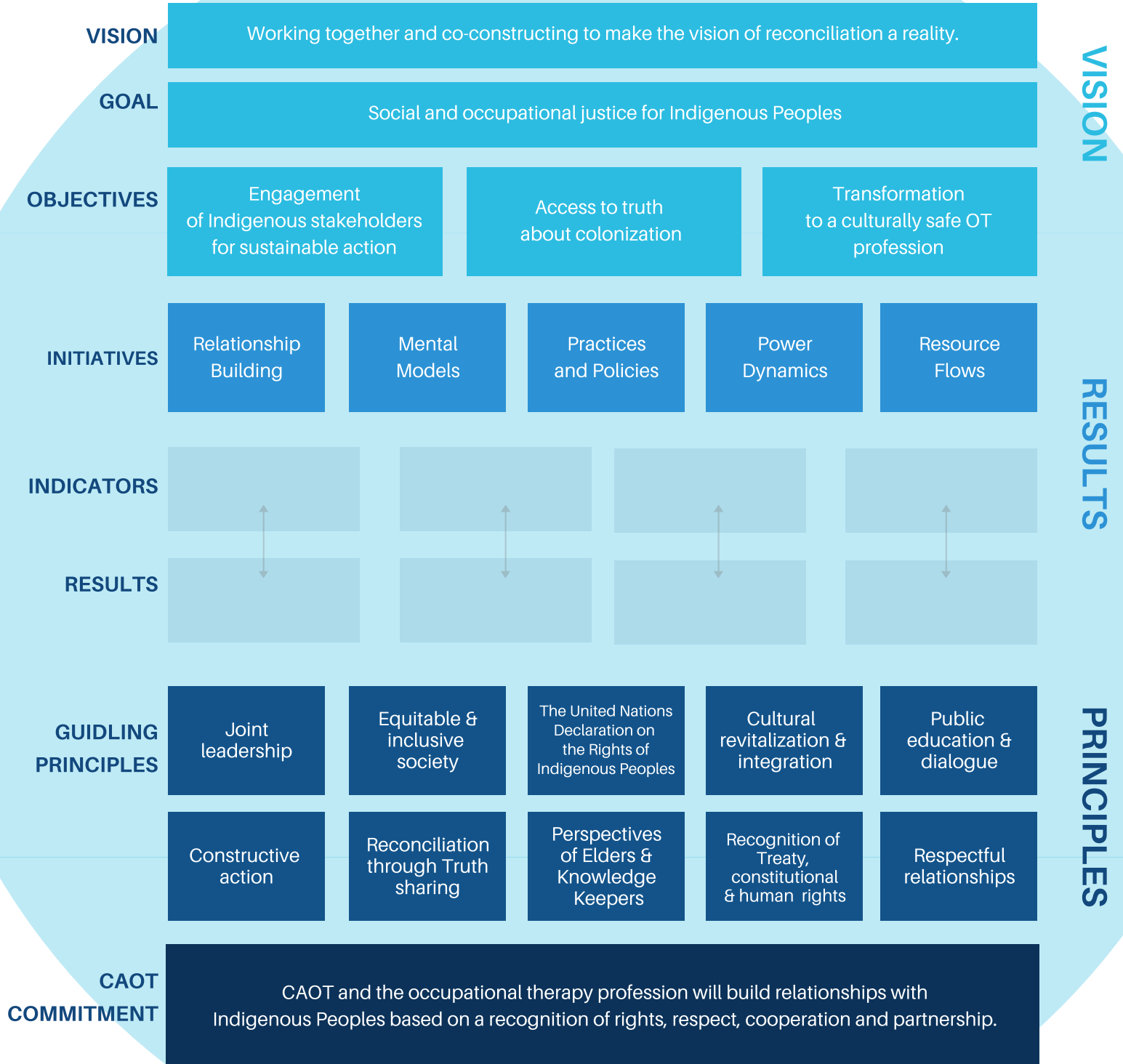


NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US



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CAOT - ACE

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC) TASK FORCE PRELIMINARY THREE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

MANDATE

The mandate of the TRC Task Force is to facilitate actions that will create sustainable occupational therapy research, clinical practice, and education that fosters reconciliation and decolonization within the profession. This process will undoubtedly be multi-generational and complex, however, as a first step, this task force is recommending concrete actions over a three-year horizon (2019-2020; 2020-2021; 2021-2022) to coincide with CAOT's Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan sets a course for the Association that includes 3 pillars: awareness of occupational therapy, access to occupational therapy and organizational excellence. The TRC Task Force Action Plan will align with the strategic priority of awareness of occupational therapy, through educational initiatives aimed at promoting an understanding of the colonial aspects of the profession, and how the profession and occupational therapists can lead in cultural safety and humility in alignment with the TRC Calls to Action. This TRC Action Plan also supports CAOT's second strategic priority – increasing access to OT- in Indigenous communities, including through the recruitment and retention of Indigenous occupational therapists to enhance occupational therapy coverage for Indigenous peoples in Indigenous communities. The TRC Task Force will also pave the way forward for the profession to lead in reconciliation efforts, and in doing so, strengthen CAOT's organizational excellence, another key pillar of the Strategic Plan.

This CAOT Task Force has laid out a 3-year plan for strategic engagement, analysis and education to set the profession of occupational therapy onto a path of cultural safety and decolonization- starting with informing actions to implement the TRC Calls to Action within occupational therapy. This work will seek to impact all aspects of the profession - education, research, clinical practice and leadership and encompass Occupational Therapists Assistants. We anticipate that the Task Force activities during the three-year period will set the foundation for ongoing work needed to achieve the goal of social and occupational justice for Indigenous Peoples. We understand that this work will require engagement of key stakeholders and will involve close collaboration with Indigenous communities as well as across the profession of occupational therapy to start a ripple effect of change. This work will be flexible to meet the changing needs of Indigenous people and communities, occupational therapists, occupational therapy organizations and researchers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) Calls to Action and the Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) Calls for Justice, and guided by the principles of reconciliation (Annex 1), the TRC Task Force will promote leadership within occupational therapy in Canada to develop sustainable occupational therapy research, clinical practice, education and leadership to foster reconciliation and decolonization of occupational therapy.

OBJECTIVES

The principal focus objectives of the TRC Task Force are to:

1. Engage key Indigenous and occupational therapy stakeholders in building capacity for sustainable action toward decolonization of occupational therapy.
2. Ensure that occupational therapy students and practicing therapists have access to information that expounds the truth about Canadian colonization and the ongoing legacy of colonization that continues to be experienced by Indigenous Peoples.
3. Implement strategies that will transform occupational therapy education, clinical practice and research that is culturally safe and responsive to Indigenous individuals and communities.

The Terms of Reference for the TRC Task Force are included in Annex 2.

MEMBERSHIP

Co- Chairs: Kaarina Valavaara & Angie Phenix

CAOT Board Representatives: Giovanna Boniface, Suzanne Lendvoy, Lisa Diamond-Burchuk

CAOT Member: Justine Jecker

CAOT Secretariat: Havelin Anand & Candice McEwen

Invited Guests and Allies: Gayle Restall & Janna MacLachlan

As more Indigenous occupational therapist students enter the profession and as the Task Force strategically engages with Indigenous occupational therapists, the Co-Chairs would like to reserve the right (with consensus from the core group) to invite Indigenous occupational therapists to be part of this task force. It will be expected that Indigenous occupational therapists would be compensated for time and travel as other core members. Indigenous occupational therapists are vastly under-represented in the profession of occupational therapy and many, informally, feel disengaged and unattached to the

profession. It would be a key demonstration of the prioritization of reconciliation within the profession to build up and support future Indigenous OT leaders.

MEETINGS

There have been five TRC Task Force Meetings to date since the creation of the TRC Task Force following CAOT Board approval at the June 2019 Board meeting. Meetings have been held in 1-hour increments via teleconference set up by the CAOT Secretariat on the following dates:

Monday, June 24th, 2019

Thursday, July 25th, 2019

Thursday, August 15th, 2019

Tuesday, September 10th,

Monday, November 4th, 2019

CAOT INITIATIVES

Between 2016 and 2019 CAOT undertook several initiatives to advance selected TRC Calls to Action within the profession of occupational therapy, including: webinars, special OT NOW edition focused on the TRC, Professional Issue Forums (PIFs), extended conference sessions, Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC) Reflection Day and a new Position Statement on OT and Indigenous Peoples' Health.

These activities have contributed to facilitating increased awareness of how residential schools and the ongoing impact of colonialism continues to lead to ongoing health inequities of Indigenous peoples compared to other Canadians. There is also an increasing awareness that occupational therapy theories, models and practice(s) need thoughtful reflection and change in order to be able to provide culturally safe occupational therapy research, education and practice to address these ongoing disparities.

While this awareness is critical to advance reconciliation, the activities have been largely *ad hoc* and it is becoming increasingly clear that leadership is required to set direction, outcomes and accountability for the Occupational Therapy Profession to comprehensively respond to the TRC Calls to Action and create culturally safe occupational therapy research, education and practice.

At the June 2019 CAOT Board Meeting, it was decided to convene a CAOT TRC Task Force to provide this leadership.

The full suite of CAOT's work on TRC Calls to Action is included in Annex 3.

PATH TO MOVE FORWARD

Reconciliation and decolonization will take many generations and the path is not easy. Creating the groundwork for sustainable reconciliation and decolonization across the profession will require disruption of taken for granted notions of occupational therapy and current ways of doing things. This will require systems changes. Recognizing that further guidance is required from Indigenous stakeholders, we are utilizing a Western model at this point since none of the consultation has occurred yet. It is not our intention to appropriate Indigenous knowledge or misuse it unintentionally so it will be incorporated under the guidance of an Elder or knowledge keeper at a future date.

The ideas situated here are structured under Kania et al.'s (2018) six conditions of system change which are: relationships and connections, mental models, practices, policies, power dynamics and resource flows. Kania et al., argued that these six conditions can hold complex social problems in place or enable social change. Recognizing that the ongoing colonization of Indigenous Peoples in Canada is a complex social issue, addressing these conditions through collective action has the potential for making the desired social changes.

The following actions are organized under the conditions of systems change which are aligned with the TRC Task Force's objectives.

RELATIONSHIPS

Kania et al. (2018) state that the "quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints" (p. 4) is important to systems change. Building relationships aligns with the first objective of the TRC Task Force to *engage key Indigenous and occupational therapy stakeholders in building capacity for sustainable action toward decolonization of occupational therapy.*

Year 1 Activities

1. Identify Indigenous Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers and communities to guide aspects of the decolonizing work of CAOT.
2. Propose a panel discussion with leaders of occupational therapy organizations ACOTRO, ACOTUP, ACOTPA and other key stakeholders to: a) build on the valuable dialogue that was initiated in Vancouver in 2018, and b) identify the steps taken at each of the organizations and their plans to take action to facilitate system changes.

Year 2 Activities

1. Build on the existing CAOT Mentorship On Demand (MOD) program to provide Indigenous occupational therapists and occupational therapists working in Indigenous communities with mentors to foster culturally safe and responsive practice.
2. Convene a think tank session with key stakeholders to develop an umbrella plan for creating sustainable change toward decolonizing occupational therapy.

Year 3 Activities

1. Support the development of Indigenous OT Practice Network (or other practice supports similar to the Indigenous Physicians/Indigenous Nurses Association or Indigenous Allied Health Australia). Build partnerships with other rehabilitation disciplines to increase numbers (such as physiotherapists or speech language pathologists). This will build on and enhance the work undertaken during the first two years.

MENTAL MODELS

Mental models are “habits of thoughts- deeply held beliefs and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do and how we talk” (Kania, et al. 2018, p. 4). Mental models are influenced by the extent of knowledge on issues and social forces that generate ideas. Addressing the core models, frameworks and assumptions about human occupation underpinning occupational therapy practice with relation to Indigenous Peoples will be paramount in co-creating cultural safe occupational therapy research, education and practice.

Addressing mental models aligns well with the second focus objective of the Task Force to ensure that occupational therapy students and practicing therapists have access to information that expounds the truth about Canadian colonization and the ongoing legacy of colonization that continues to be experienced by Indigenous Peoples.

Year 1 Activities

1. Offer a CAOT sponsored KAIROS Blanket Exercise and a pre-conference workshop for occupational therapy leadership and delegates at CAOT Conference 2020. The proposed workshop is called *“Examining privilege and oppression in the context of reconciliation and Indigenous rights: Directions for occupational therapists and other rehabilitation providers.”* This workshop will

support occupational therapists to reflect on their positionality and role in reconciliation and rights promotion related to occupational therapy education, practice and research.

- 1) Ensure the inclusion and participation of Elders and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge Keepers and respect for the perspective and education and ceremony they bring to each conference and other CAOT sponsored events.
- 2) Identify key student or student groups and/or CAOT intern(s)/student(s) to conduct two scoping literature reviews which may include:
 - A) Best Practices in Reconciliation
 - I. Review of other profession's responses.
 - II. Collaboration with Indigenous communities.
 - III. Addressing settler colonialism in OT models.
 - B) Decolonization practices within education, research and clinical practice
 - I. Best Practices.
 - II. Engaging and respecting Indigenous knowledges (knowledge recovery; privileging Indigenous knowledges).
 - III. Retention and recruitment of Indigenous scholars.

Year 2 Activities

- 1) Continue with CAOT Intern or student to conduct two scoping literature reviews and start implementing recommendations and findings from literature reviews

PRACTICES AND POLICIES

In this context we refer to the practices of occupational therapy organizations and individual therapists as well as the policies or rules that guide practices. These activities align with the TRC Task Force's third objective to implement strategies that will transform occupational therapy education, clinical practice and research that is culturally safe and responsive to Indigenous individuals and communities.

Activities that specifically relate to occupational therapy entry level curriculum will be done in close collaboration with entry level occupational therapy university programs, ACOTUP, CAOT and other key stakeholders identified in year 1.

Year 1 Activities

1. Identify core competencies of culturally safe and responsive occupational therapy practice with Indigenous people and communities that will inform the development of the CORECOM document.
2. Contribute to the development of practice frameworks for occupational therapy that include Indigenous perspectives.
3. Provide consultation on key CAOT initiatives as appropriate, such as Enabling Occupation text revision, practice/position statements, role papers, guidance documents.

Year 2 Activities

1. Develop a set of recommended key topics related to colonialism and Indigenous history, rights, experiences, health and well-being to be included in occupational therapy education curriculum.
2. Propose a mentorship session at the 2021 CAOT Conference where graduate students doing, or interested in doing research with Indigenous communities, could meet briefly with occupational therapy academics doing research that is respectful and inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Year 3 Activities

1. Document a set of best practices for decolonizing occupational therapy education programs.
2. Document recommendations for Accreditation Standards that include, but are not limited to, recruitment and retention of Indigenous students into entry level OT programs, recruitment, retention and promotion of Indigenous occupational therapy scholars into academic and leadership positions, and curriculum content related to Indigenous health and wellbeing.
3. Collaborate with CAOT Staff and exam committee to create sample cultural safety and critical reflexivity questions that can be incorporated into the National Occupational Therapy Certification Exam.

POWER DYNAMICS

According to Kania et al. (2018), power dynamics refer to the “distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organizations” (p. 4).

Year 1 Activities

1. Build on the existing CAOT mentor program to provide Indigenous occupational therapists with mentors to foster Indigenous occupational therapy leadership.

RESOURCE FLOWS

According to Kania et al. (2018), this condition of systems change refers to how money, people, knowledge, information, and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.

Year 3 Activities

1. Develop a position statement or similar document that outlines alternative funding models that promote relationship building and time spent with Indigenous clients.

COSTS

These particular action items will be costed out over year 1 of the Task Force as much work still needs to be done to identify key stakeholders and build relationships. Building these relationships will incur some anticipated costs that include:

1. Honoraria for Elders (\$200-300/day) and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge Keepers (\$200-300/day) to acknowledge respect for their knowledge and time. Tobacco and gifts also will need to be provided pending local customs which will incur costs. The Task Force will endeavor to engage local elders whenever possible to minimize travel; however, if an Elder or Knowledge Keeper is required to travel then all travel, hospitality and per diems will have to be covered.
2. Travel, hotel and paid leave for members of the Task Force (if meetings occur during normal business hours) to meet 1 day/year of the Task Force in person in order to collate all information from stakeholder engagement, debrief on activities and set plans for the following year. \$10,000 – pending if we can pair flights and travel with other CAOT events).
3. CAOT Conference 2020
 - a. Preconference workshop (\$2500)
 - b. Blanket Exercise (\$1000)

The TRC Task Force recognizes the importance of judicious and prudent fiscal spending of membership monies and will make every effort to plan in person meetings around other CAOT events (i.e., board meetings, conferences) to minimize costs. Members contributing their time, particularly Indigenous communities and occupational therapists, should be compensated for their knowledge, labour and time.

CONCLUSION

This preliminary action plan and the accompanying infographic presented to the Board is a working draft of proposed actions to inform how CAOT and the occupational therapy profession in Canada can take 'next steps' to addressing the TRC Calls to Action (specifically 18-24 under 'health') in meaningful and sustainable ways.

As the first year will largely consist of identifying key Indigenous and occupational therapy scholars, we expect and indeed will ask these stakeholders to help evolve and give detail to this Action Plan to make it into a sustainable and relevant 3 year plan to implement the TRC Calls to Action.

The Task Force is requesting support for a face-to-face meeting in March 2020 to develop a finessed version of the Action Plan that will be submitted to the Board at its May 2020 meeting at CAOT's Conference in Saskatoon.

ANNEX 1

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Principles of Truth and Reconciliation](#)

ANNEX 2

CAOT TRC TASK FORCE: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background:

TRC was established by the Government of Canada. Its work between 2007 and 2015 resulted in a final report released in 2015 with 94 "calls to action" -- urging all levels of government — federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous — to work together to change policies and programs in a concerted effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and move forward with reconciliation.

At the June 2019 CAOT Board Meeting, it was decided to convene a CAOT TRC Task Force to provide this leadership.

Mandate:

The mandate of the Task Force is to deliver a Plan to the Board in November 2019 as to how the occupational therapy profession will respond to the TRC Calls to Action and seek to create culturally safe occupational therapy research, education and practice over the next 3 years.

Reporting Structure/ Governance:

The Task Force reports to CAOT's Board

Membership:

The Task Force comprises: 2 Indigenous Occupational Therapist Co-Chairs; 3 CAOT Board members; 2 CAOT staffers (who will serve as the Secretariat) and invited guests/allies as required – to serve as experts and inform deliberations of the Task Force and contribute to the Plan.

Frequency of Meetings:

TBD (bi-weekly) and via teleconference

Roles and Responsibilities:

- The Task Force will be led by 2 Co-Chairs, who will chair the meetings
- Prepare agenda(s) for meetings
- Ensure discussions are in line with the mandate
- Provide updates to the Board if requested

Secretariat is responsible for:

- Scheduling meetings
- Preparations and distribution of minutes and other material as required
- Serve as the intermediary between TRC Task Force, CAOT CEO & Board

Task Force Members are responsible for:

- Becoming familiar with key documents

- Actively participating in meetings
- Applying their expertise and experience and providing and reviewing input
- Contributing to the development of a plan for presentation to the Board

Invited guests/allies are responsible for:

- Providing perspectives, inputs, expertise to the Task Force
- Assisting in the development of the Plan

Annex 3

CAOT Initiatives

Background:

TRC was established by the Government of Canada. Its work between 2007 and 2015 resulted in a final report released in 2015 with 94 "calls to action" -- urging all levels of government — federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous — to work together to change policies and programs in a concerted effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and move forward with reconciliation.

The following initiatives organized in chronological order comprise CAOT's work on TRC Calls to Action:

2016

CAOT conducted webinars whose objectives were to:

1. Engage occupational therapists interested in TRC's recommendations in a conversation;
2. Obtain their input and perspectives on the recommendations in general and specific areas of focus for occupational therapy;

3. Determine “way forward” approaches to CAOT’s response and action.

2017

CAOT in collaboration with partners (ACOTUP, ACOTRO, ACOTPA and COTF) dedicated the Occupational Therapy Canada (OTC) Reflection Day to:

- providing occupational therapy leaders in Canada, an introduction to and opportunity to reflect on:

History of Indigenous peoples’ in Canada and how colonialism impacts health and wellbeing

- Indigenous ways of knowing
- Anti-oppressive education and practice principles
- Principles of reconciliation in the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action
- Ideas and commitment on how to continue learning and how to pursue conciliation personally, and professionally.

CAOT sponsored an extended session at Conference 2017, whose objective was to raise awareness of the role that occupational therapists have in understanding the history and consequences of colonization in Canada and responding to the Commission’s Calls to Action. The intent was that session participants would: 1) use an anti-oppressive lens to gain greater understanding of how social positions in Canadian society, including those of occupational therapists, are assigned value and privilege; 2) increase their awareness of the influence of colonization on the inequities experienced by Indigenous peoples; and 3) identify opportunities for occupational therapists to partner with Indigenous peoples to redress these colonial consequences.

It was envisaged that the session would involve occupational therapists in developing a growing

awareness of how they can meet their moral and ethical responsibility to respond to the Calls to Action and facilitate the ongoing work and advocacy efforts of the CAOT and the Occupational Therapy and Indigenous Health Network with decision makers, government stakeholders and other health professionals.

Conference 2017 also had 2 additional sessions: 1. Occupational policy implications for the TRC findings that define actions emanating from the TRC recommendations; 2. occupational therapy & Indigenous perspectives on health and wellness - that included a discussion on Indigenous approaches to wellness, balance, wholeness, interconnectedness, spirituality, community and relationship to land.

2018

2018 OTC Reflection Day “Disrupting ‘business as usual’: Enhancing the provision of culturally safe occupational therapy with Indigenous communities, families and individuals through organizational leadership” – built on the OTC session in 2017.

In preparation for the day participants were asked to:

- Watch the CBC 8th Fire series (2011) at <https://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/blog/8th-fire-wabs-walk-through-history>
- Access the resources at the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health: <https://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/en/>
- Create a local reading and discussion group
- Read The TRC Summary Report: http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf and read the following:

- Bishop, A. (2002). *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people.*

New York, NY: Zed Books.

- Phenix, A.; Valavaara, K. (2016). "Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission: Calls to action in occupational therapy." *Occupational Therapy Now*, 18(6), 17-18.

- Restall, G., Gerlach, A., Valavaara, K., & Phenix, A. (2016). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action: How will occupational therapists respond? (Guest Editorial), *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 83(5), 264-268.

- Wellesley Institute. (2015). First peoples, second class treatment: The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

<http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Summary-First-Peoples-Second-Class-Treatment-Final.pdf>

A report of the day's discussion was published in *OT Now*, see Trentham, B., Eadie, S., Gerlach, A., & Restall, G. (2018). *Occupational Therapy Canada 2018: A day of reflection and dialogue*. *Occupational Therapy Now*, 25 (5): 30-31

CAOT Conference 2018 also featured a Professional Issue Forum (PIF) entitled: "Inspiring Actions: Occupational Therapy Paths to Truth & Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples." It took place on June 21, 2018, National Indigenous Peoples Day, to provide a timely and important opportunity for the profession to reflect and document on how occupational therapy can play a greater role in partnering with Indigenous communities and organizations to transform practices, education, and research to address the social injustices and health inequities that many Indigenous people continue to experience.

Other sessions at Conference 2018 included the following 5 sessions:

1. Community, Child/ Adolescent General Colonization and coercion in informed consent: Implications for occupational therapists;

2. Canada's legacy of colonization acts as a coercive force, inhibiting free and informed

consent for Indigenous clients. Employing concepts from bioethics, critical approaches and Indigenous world views, and reflecting on lived experiences, this paper reports on barriers to and solutions for informed consent in services provided to Indigenous children;

3. Education Nonspecific to Client Group Informing occupational therapy education with Indigenous Perspectives. In the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this session reflected the development and delivery of an elective course for MScOT students entering practice. This course called on students to critically reflect on the impacts of colonization, oppression, racism as it relates to occupational therapy practice with Indigenous people;

4. A scoping review and analysis of survey data support a partnership with Indigenous representatives. To foster evidence-based occupational therapy, courses of action based on elders' contributions to intergenerational solidarity as speakers, organizers, facilitators, counsellors, mediators or creators;

5. Another session focussed on preparing students for culturally safe occupational therapy with Indigenous peoples. It was emphasized that occupational therapy university programs must equip graduates to create culturally safe encounters with Indigenous clients and reduce the health disparities of Indigenous peoples. The purpose of this cross-sectional mixed methods survey was to identify the perceptions of occupational therapy students about their preparedness and confidence for working with Indigenous peoples.

Also in 2018:

CAOT released a comprehensive Position Statement on Occupational Therapy and Indigenous People in 2018 which was endorsed by the CAOT Board of Directors, and has been well

received.

CAOT hosted a Webinar entitled: Informed consent in occupational therapy: How colonization and coercion impact access for Indigenous Peoples.

2019

Publication of OT Now Special Edition - Time for action: Occupational therapy responses to the TRC (July 2019)

CAOT Conference 2019

CAOT Conference 2019 featured the following 8 sessions flowing from the TRC

1. Improving Indigenous access to healthcare services through inter-professional collaboration;
2. Conversations on oppression and resistance;
3. A pilot educational initiative responding to TRC;
4. Knowledge in Indigenous health;
5. Fieldwork learning and Indigenous allyship;
6. Canadian healthcare responses to TRC;
7. OT roles in Indigenous context;
8. Indigenous People's well-being.