

Megan R. Atkinson, MA, OTR/L she / her

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PROFILE Care partner, occupational therapist and lifelong learner committed to service and delivering best outcomes through evidence-based practice; a collaborative and personable healthcare professional valuing collaborative and coordinated care; an educator engaging with fellow care partners and adult learners to promote best practices, continual communication, and access to resources. Skills and knowledge have been acquired through positions in multiple healthcare settings with a focus on maximizing home and community participation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Aug 2017 to present

Occupational Therapist & Consultant, Home & Community Participation (contract & private)

- Conduct occupational therapy assessments at client residences; follow-up sessions take place in multiple settings including community contexts and via telehealth.
- Collaborate with clients to create individualized plans of care to treat the whole person.
- Coordinate with all members of the care team regarding interventions and goals, equipment needs, follow-up care and discharge planning.
- Train caregivers to perform safe transfers, provide bed baths as well as other assistance at the appropriate level so to facilitate maximal patient rehabilitation and safety.
- Referring diagnoses include complex conditions such as Parkinson's disease, Lou Gehrig's disease, Late-onset Tay-Sachs, dementia, post-craniotomy, complications of diabetes mellitus, Multiple sclerosis and other conditions involving movement disorders.
- Confident in multi-surface positioning strategies especially to prevent pressure ulcers; able to recommend specialized equipment such as tub transfer systems and power wheelchairs.

June 2022 to present

Research Therapist, UCLA Department of Neurology

- Treatment therapist for Dr. Steven Cramer's research study, Dopaminergic Enhancement of Rehabilitation Therapy Early After Stroke, a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study involving participants with arm weakness due to stroke occurring within the past 30 days
- Create individualized tele-rehabilitation sessions: 70 minutes of games, exercises and stroke education requiring use of affected arm.
- Supervise subjects in their participation in tele-rehabilitation session and document participants' progress, any performance issues, and changes to patient's 70-minute program.
- Troubleshoot program or hardware problems that arise during session to provide subject with best possible rehabilitation experience; follow up with software engineer and other team members as appropriate to ensure enduring resolution.
- Train occupational and physical therapists: to perform subject orientations and tele-rehabilitation sessions; to use multiple web-based platforms and software tools effectively.
- Educate nursing staff at rehabilitation and skilled nursing facilities about research participation following patient discharge from acute care.
- Continually improve tele-rehabilitation program. Successfully completed revision of game instructions to improve readability. Propose hardware and software changes based on subject observations and understanding of effects of stroke - all of which have been implemented to date.

June 2015 - Aug 2017 Occupational Therapist I, California Children's Services, Los Angeles

- Provided one-to-one, family-centered occupational therapy services to children under age 21 with chronic conditions such as cerebral palsy, traumatic and acquired brain injury, heart disease, muscular dystrophy, cancer, congenital amputation, and infectious diseases producing major sequelae.
- Managed wheelchair and equipment clinics, and fabricated splints for various positioning needs.
- Administered constraint-induced-movement therapy (CIMT) per standard and modified protocols.
- Facilitated cooking group for adolescents with cerebral palsy.
- Developed strong case management and planning skills to support an individual caseload of 80+ children and their families.

Feb 2015 - May 2017 Occupational Therapist (contract) USC OT Faculty Practice, Los Angeles

- Provided services aligned with USC OT Faculty Practice lifestyle management curriculum to coach and support participants of the LACDMH Mental Health Career Advisors Program (MHCAP), a component of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training Plan, who sought changes and advancement in career and education.

Dec 2014 - June 2015 Occupational Therapist, Total Education Solutions, Alhambra, CA

- Supported children's learning and development through play and exploration in natural settings such as the home, school, and community, as well as in the clinic setting.
- Administered evidence-based assessments; collaborated with family, caregivers, educators, and members of the care team to design and amend treatment plans.
- Reassessed and coordinated discharge or continuation of services.
- Based all activity and treatment plans on evidence-based interventions and clinical decision making with the ability to identify effective adaptive sensory strategies through play.

Feb-Nov 2014 Home Health Aide, Hello Home Care, Pasadena, CA

- Provider of individualized care and support to clients in their residential settings (part-time while completing MA and OTR/L requirements).
- Assisted clients with activities of daily living such ranging from bed baths (total assistance) to preparing meals following dysphagia protocols.
- Provided transportation in the community, supervised exercise programs, facilitated safe and enjoyable activities. Assisted clients in adapting self-care and home management routines.
- Served to promote safe aging in place while providing appropriate support.

Summer 2014 OTS at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation (Level II Fieldwork), West Orange, NJ

- Treated a full caseload (approximately 8 patients / day) in this acute inpatient rehabilitation setting.
- Assessed patient medical status and performance capacity following acute inpatient hospitalization.
- Developed of plan of care in collaboration with the patient as well as patient's caregiver, significant other, or family members (given patient consent).
- Coordinated with treatment team consisting of surgeons, rehabilitation physician, physical and speech therapists, case managers and social workers, including colleagues from outside organizations such as skilled nursing facilities.
- Facilitated weekly medication management group.
- Provided individualized arm / hand motor relearning and pre-prosthetic training programs.
- Researched, developed and delivered nurse-approved and occupational therapy-based diabetes management program.

Summer 2013 OTS at Pacific Clinics Wellness Center (Level II Fieldwork), Pasadena, CA

- Occupational Therapy Student Intern at Pacific Clinics Wellness Center site: collaborated with adults with serious mental illness (SMI) in their recovery.
- Group leader and facilitator for Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery (NEW-R) and Sense-ability (Sensory Connection Program).
- Created and facilitated Move and Groove group (body-awareness meditation, stretching, and movement with music).
- Project leader and facilitator for Member Mural and Zen Garden projects.
- Presented on Oral Health at members' health fair and provided follow-up coaching.
- Designed and implemented manualized oral health intervention for individuals with SMI.

9/2005 - 5/2012 Program / Divisional Administrator, New York University, New York, NY

- As program administrator for NYU's Continuing Education Programs in Finance, Information Technology, and Project Management, managed and developed the systems necessary to implement courses from concept to delivery; to service students from their advisement to their certificate completion; and to mentor an industry-expert faculty in course development, pedagogy, and administrative processes.
- As a division-wide administrator, represented the Programs in Business of NYU's School of Professional Studies, reporting directly to the Divisional Dean as executive assistant.
- Assisted in academic and corporate initiatives including corporate and contract education planning and negotiation.

SKILLS

- Applied practice in teaching and education including curriculum design. Competent in interactive learning technology, health literacy methodology, knowledge translation and evidence application
- Management experience in small business, clinic, academic, and private practice settings with experience in project and program development, supervision, coordinated care practices, interdisciplinary collaboration
- Client / patient assessment using evidence-based screening tools including but not limited to Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM), Fugl-Meyer Assessment of Motor Recovery after Stroke, Motor-Free Visual Perception Test (MVPT-4), Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), depression scales including CESD-R-10, PHQ-9, and Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS).
- Independent delivery of evidence-based interventions such as Neurodevelopmental treatment (NDT) and other neurologic and motor control interventions; Constraint Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT), Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery (NEW-R), Illness Management and Recovery (IMR), Sensory Connection Program (Sense-Ability), Positive Approach to Care® techniques including Hand-under-Hand™ with individuals living with dementia

EDUCATION

- Thomas Jefferson University, Post-Professional Doctoral Student, expected graduation Summer 2024
 - Advanced Practice Certificate: Teaching in the Digital Age
- Positive Approach to Care® (PAC) Consultant Certification for Dementia Care, 2018

- University of Southern California, MA in Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science, 2014
- New York University, BA in Social Sciences, Psychology, 2008

INTERESTS

- Professionally, these include risks for depression and substance misuse in homebound populations, transition to home and community from inpatient rehabilitation, individualized engagement practices for people with dementia
- Personal interests include ceramic art, learning to use my sewing machines, movement and meditation practices, being the ultimate caregiver to my dogs