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Leadership in Occupational Therapy: Influencers of the Field

The purpose of this study is to learn about what factors motivated prominent occupational therapists to become leaders. Participants in the study were occupational therapists who advanced the profession and are celebrated on the List of 100 Influential People on the Occupational Therapy Centennial website established by the American Occupational Therapy Association (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2017b). Qualitative descriptive analysis exploring prominent occupational therapists' journeys to leadership was conducted based on semi-structured interviews in a virtual format with eight participants. Two overarching themes were identified in OT leaders' experiences: "OT leaders' leadership journey" and "tools that OT leaders had." Findings revealed that OT leaders' leadership journey is supported by a set of tools that OT leaders had. Researchers used the Person-Environment-Occupation Model to view leadership from an OT perspective, and found that leaders' journeys portrayed an interaction between their person factors and environmental contexts which influences their occupations and leads to successful achievements in the field. Knowledge gained from this study furthers the understanding of how to contribute to and advance the profession as leaders, guide improvements to current occupational therapy programs' education curricula, and how to motivate and mentor future leaders.

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