



Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

Response from the College of Occupational Therapists

Introduction

The College of Occupational Therapists (COT) is pleased to provide a response to the consultation document 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students' consultation, with contributions from the Council of Occupational Therapists Educational Directors (COTED) and Ethics Review Committee.

The College of Occupational Therapists is the professional body for occupational therapists and represents over 28,000 occupational therapists, support workers and students from across the United Kingdom. Occupational therapists work in the NHS, Local Authority social care services, housing, schools, prisons, voluntary and independent sectors, and vocational and employment rehabilitation services.

Occupational therapists work with people of all ages with a wide range of occupational problems resulting from physical, mental, social or developmental difficulties.

The philosophy of occupational therapy is founded on the concept that occupation is essential to human existence and good health and wellbeing. Occupation includes all the things that people do or participate in. For example, caring for themselves and others, working, learning, playing and interacting with others. Being deprived of or having limited access to occupation can affect physical and psychological health.

General Comments

The College of Occupational Therapists supports this document from HPC that aims to provide students with general guidance on issues about conduct and ethics. The guidance also provides students with an insight into the work of HPC and responsibilities of being a registrant.

The guidance document is generally clear, concise and comprehensive and will be a useful resource to both students and academic staff within the context of practice placements and when learning about conduct and ethics in a "classroom" environment.

Specific Comments

The College would expect a greater emphasis to be placed on the role of the students own professional Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (when appropriate). For example, under "Other useful publications" on page 17.



Within the Guidance section, the following suggested amendments have been identified:

Page 8, bullet point 1.5: you should share these concerns with a “senior” member of the placement team

Page 8, bullet point 2.4: if service users are not able to provide written consent, an alternative method of consent should be utilised

Page 9, bullet point 4.1: an example of a “change to your health, which may put your service users at risk” would be beneficial

Page 9, bullet point 6.3: The sentence beginning “you should ask for help when necessary” could also include “and know when you are potentially working outside your knowledge and skills”.