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The Debate: Is it time to reconsider framing our work as therapy?

Helene Polatajko¹, Jennifer Creek², Jane Davis¹, Debra Cameron¹, Kit Sinclair³

¹*University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*, ²*Not applicable, Yorkshire, UK*, ³*Not applicable, Hong Kong, China*

Through much of the 20th century, occupational therapists around the world, privately and publicly, debated the relevance of the word occupation to name our profession. By the end of that century a renewed commitment to occupation as our professional focus, our main domain of concern, emerged.

Now a new debate is emerging: occupational therapists are beginning to question the appropriateness of the word therapy as the descriptor of our professional work. This workshop will bring this issue into our professional forum for debate.

This workshop will take the form of a formal debate on the motion: 'This house believes that it is time to reconsider framing our work as therapy'.

Learning objectives:

1. Reflect on the meaning of our profession's title: occupational therapy
2. Recognize the implications of identifying ourselves as therapists in today's world
3. Reach a decision about the appropriateness of calling ourselves occupational therapists

Teaching methods:

The session will be structured as a formal moderated debate: argued by a proposer and opponent and two seconders each, lasting 60 minutes. At the beginning, the moderator will ask the audience to vote on the motion. The format will be as follows: the proposer speaks to the motion for seven minutes; the opposer speaks against the motion for seven minutes; the four seconders speak in turn for three minutes each, for and against the motion; the moderator invites contributions from the audience for a maximum of one minute each, and the debate ends with a final vote.