

Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association
2026 TNOTA CONFERENCE



OT in a Changing World

Schedule for 2026 TNOTA Conference
September 18-20, 2026
Scarritt Bennett Center
Nashville, TN

Friday, September 18, 2026
Pre-Conference

Time	Session
1230-1:00	Registration
1:00-3:00	Suicide Prevention Training: The Great Hall <i>Dr. Kimberly Jessee, OTD, MS, OTR/L, CPAM</i>
3:00-3:15	Break
3:15-5:15	Ethics and Jurisprudence: The Great Hall <i>Stephanie Lancaster, EdD, OTR/L</i>

Saturday, September 19, 2026

Time	Session
7:30-8:00	Registration <i>Exhibitor Hall Open</i>

8:00-8:30	Welcome and Presidential Address: The Great Hall <i>Breakfast Provided</i>		
8:40-10:25	Workshop 1: Adult Neurological Upper Extremity Assessment Workshop (Adult - Intermediate) <i>Tabitha Gibbs, MSOT, EdD</i> <i>Caitlin Fisher, OTD</i>	Workshop 2: So You Want to Work in the NICU? Clinical Foundations and Career Pathways for Occupational Therapists (Pediatric - Introductory) <i>Libby Skolnik M.S. OTR/L, W CEIM, NTMTC, PMH-C</i>	Workshop 3: The "Not-so-Funny" Bone: Evidence-Based Evaluation and Treatment of Ulnar Nerve Compression (Specialty - Intermediate) <i>Jamie L Bergner, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, COMT</i>
10:35-11:25	Short Course 1: Not in Charge, But Not Silent: Navigating Collaboration, Conflict, and Professional Identity on Healthcare Teams (Adult - Intermediate) <i>Meagan Oslund, OTD, OTR/L</i>	Short Course 2: Rethinking Functional Play: Centering Neurodivergent Play as Meaningful Occupation (Pediatric - Intermediate) <i>Alyssa Engel, OTD, OTR/L, DIR-Proficient</i>	Short Course 3: Women's Health and Assistive Technology: A Transdisciplinary Lifespan Perspective (Specialty - Introductory) <i>Gabriella Guerra-Valero, OTR/L, LMT</i> <i>Dr. Anjali K. Parti, OTD, OTR/L</i> <i>Dr. Anna Evans, PT, DPT, GCS, CEEAA</i> <i>Dr. Preeti Jha, PT, DPT, OCS, CYTP</i>

11:30 -12:45	Keynote Presentation: The Rhythm of Participation: The Co-Treatment Between Music Therapists and Occupational Therapy Practitioners The Great Hall <i>Lunch Provided</i> <i>Anna Fung, OTD, MOT, OTR/L</i> <i>Carolyn Kalogris, OTR/L</i> <i>Cindy Blackwell, OTD, OTR/L</i>
--------------	---

12:55 - 2:40	Workshop 4: Tried & True Tips for ADLs: Adaptive Strategies That Work in Everyday OT Practice (Adult - Introductory) <i>Kimberly Breeden, MS, OTR/L</i> <i>Niccole Rowe, BA, COTA/L</i>	Workshop 5: Keeping the Beat: Function-Focused Documentation in an AI-Driven World (Academia - Intermediate) <i>Jennifer Lawson, MSOT, OTR/L, AFWC, Associate Professor</i> <i>Courtney Boren, MSOT, OTR/L, Program Director, Associate Professor</i>	Workshop 6: Challenging Behaviors in a Changing World: Utilizing Co-Regulation in Pediatric Therapy (Pediatric - Introductory) <i>Ellen Ranson, MOT, OTR/L</i>	Workshop 7: Occupational Therapy's Role in Postpartum Well-being (Specialty - Introductory) <i>Brittany Ford, OTS</i>
---------------------	--	--	--	---

2:45 - 3:45 **The Great Hall**
Poster Session #1

4:00 - 4:50	Short Course 4: The Unconventional OT: Translating Clinical Practice into Medical Device Innovation (Specialty - Intermediate) <i>Justin Stehr MS, OTR/L, CHT, WCC, CEAS</i> <i>Téa Phillips</i>	Short Course 5: Finding Our Rhythm as OT Practitioners: The Value of Intraprofessional Collaboration (Academia - Intermediate) <i>Courtney Boren, MS, OTR/L, Associate Professor</i> <i>Jennifer Bolay, OTD, MEd, OTR/L, CNT, IBCLC, NTMTC, Assistant Professor</i>	Short Course 6: It Takes Two to Tango: Incorporating Cultural Humility into Occupational Therapy (Specialty - Introductory) <i>Stedmon Hopkins, OTD, MOT, OTR/L, CPAM</i> <i>LaRae Murray, OTD, OTR/L, CPAM</i>
--------------------	---	--	--

Sunday, September 20, 2026

7:30-8:00	Registration and Breakfast Exhibitor Hall Open		
8:00-9:45	Workshop 8: Dark Occupations: When Meaningful Activity Causes Harm (Specialty - Intermediate) <i>Kaylin Lawrence OTR/L</i> <i>Dakota Lawrence, LPC-MHSP</i>	Workshop 9: Assistive Technology for the Occupational Therapist: Playing a New Role (Specialty - Introductory) <i>Janice Reese M.Ed., OT/L, ATP</i>	Workshop 10: Handwriting Across the Lifespan: Linking Evidence-Based Components of Writing to Objective Measurement With the Kinetic Handwriting Analyst (Specialty - Advanced) <i>Kelly Phipps, OTD, OTR/L</i> <i>Evan Pendency, OTD, OTR/L</i>



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

9:55-10:45	Short Course 7: Continuing the Conversation: Rhythm, Relationship, and Occupation (Specialty - Introductory) <i>Anna Fung, OTD, MOT, OTR/L</i> <i>Carolyn Kalogris, OTR/L</i> <i>Cindy Blackwell, OTD, OTR/L</i>	Short Course 8: Live case dialogue: An innovative educational activity for assessing clinical reasoning in students (Academia - Introductory) <i>Elena Wong Espiritu PhD, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR, Professor</i> <i>Maria Papadopoulos, OTD, OTR/L, Assistant Professor</i> <i>Alex Scherr, OTD, OTR/L, Assistant Professor</i>	Short Course 9: Rewiring Recovery: The Neuroscience of Structure, Skill-Building, and Occupational Therapy in Addiction Treatment (Specialty - Intermediate) <i>Cassidy Berry, MS, OTR/L</i> <i>Kathy Ward, BS, LADAC II</i>	
10:55-11:45	Short Course 10: Supporting Every Learner: Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Strategies for NBCOT Preparation (Academia - Introductory) <i>Anna Fung, OTD, MOT, OTR/L</i> CANCELLED	Short Course 11: Survey of Occupational Therapy Experts on Sleep: A Delphi Study (Specialty - Intermediate) <i>Laura Carpenter, PhD, OTR/L</i> <i>Amanda Buono, PPOTD, OTR/L, BCP, CCAP</i>	Short Course 12: Beyond the Clinic: Occupational Therapy utilizing Equine Movement & Environment utilizing Across the Lifespan (Specialty - Introductory) <i>Ellen "Jeanni" Bonine MS, OTR/L, HPCS, CTRI</i> <i>Averie D. Thayer OTD, OTR/L, CTRI</i>	Short Course 13: NBCOT® National Certification Exam: Information You Need to Know (Student) <i>Elise Foust, COTA/L, CFPS</i>

12:00-1:15	TNOTA Annual Business Meeting & Legislative Update: The Great Hall <i>Lunch provided</i> <i>TNOTA Board Members</i>		
------------	--	--	--

1:30 - 2:00	Communities of Practice Meet up	TNOTA Board Member Volunteer Opportunity Q & A
-------------	---------------------------------	--

2:00 - 3:00	The Great Hall Poster Session #2		
-------------	---	--	--



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

3:15 - 5:00	Workshop 11: From Emotion to Goal-Directed Action: A Structured Framework for Mentoring and Advising the Struggling Student (Academia - Intermediate) <i>Jamie L Bergner, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, COMT</i> <i>Blair Bergner, MS, LPSC</i>	Workshop 12: Coaching Strategies for Occupational Therapy Practice: Supporting Follow-Through, Participation, and Behavior Change (Specialty - Intermediate) <i>Jaclyn Schwartz, PhD, OTR/L, NBC-HWC, FAOTA</i>	Workshop: 13 Resumé Rescue Workshop (Student) <i>Stephanie Lancaster, EdD, OTR/L</i> <i>Taylor Kozell, OTD, OTR/L, CBIS, CNS, PAq</i>
--------------------	---	---	--

Session Descriptions

Saturday, September 19, 2026

Short Courses

Short Course 1: Not in Charge, But Not Silent: Navigating Collaboration, Conflict, and Professional Identity on Healthcare Teams. Interprofessional collaboration is widely recognized as essential to high-quality, patient-centered care — yet most healthcare professionals were never explicitly taught how to do it, especially when they are not the ones in positional authority. This session addresses the practical realities of collaboration on healthcare teams, with particular attention to the skills occupational therapy practitioners need to initiate teamwork, sustain it under pressure, and navigate conflict when it arises. Attendees will explore the distinction between true interprofessional collaboration and parallel practice, examine how professional identity functions as both an asset and a point of tension on diverse teams, and develop concrete strategies for communicating across disciplinary lines. Special attention is given to differentiating conflict of opinion from ethical conflict and responding to each appropriately. Grounded in current evidence and real clinical experience, this session is designed for practitioners who are ready to move beyond theory and into action.

Short Course 2: Rethinking Functional Play: Centering Neurodivergent Play as Meaningful Occupation. Play is an essential childhood occupation, yet neurodivergent children are frequently assessed and treated through frameworks that pathologize how they play rather than honoring it. This short course challenges OTPs to examine assumptions embedded in traditional play models and reframe neurodivergent play as a purposeful and meaningful occupation, rather than something to be fixed. Participants will explore common neurodivergent play styles and what each reveals about a child's regulation, engagement, and relational development. Drawing on developmental and affect-based principles, this session will equip OTPs to design intervention that honors each child's developmental profile and supports authentic engagement. Practical strategies for shifting from a directive to a collaborative, child-led approach will be discussed, with application to real pediatric case examples. This session is designed for pediatric OTPs seeking a framework that centers the child's experience and strengthens therapeutic use of self.

Short Course 3: Women's Health and Assistive Technology: A Transdisciplinary Lifespan Perspective. This presentation examines the role of occupational therapy in using assistive technology and emerging Feminine Technology to support women's health. Key topics include menstrual health, maternal health, menopause, post menopause, caregiving roles, and gender bias in AT design. This course highlights how hormonal and reproductive transitions can create unique functional challenges and impact daily occupations and quality of life. Through the use of case studies, this short course demonstrates how low and high tech AT strategies



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

can be utilized to promote independence and participation. This short course emphasizes the need for advocacy, inclusive design, and a transdisciplinary approach in which OT's collaborates w/ PT's, OBGYN's, and other providers to promote quality of life. This presentation emphasizes the need for women's health as a growing and essential area of occupational therapy practice.

Short Course 4: The Unconventional OT: Translating Clinical Practice into Medical Device Innovation. Occupational therapy practitioners routinely encounter inefficiencies, variability in care delivery, and unmet patient needs, yet few are trained to translate these observations into tangible solutions. This session introduces a practical framework for expanding occupational therapy practice into medical device innovation and product development. Using real-world case examples from hand therapy and orthotic design, presenters will demonstrate how common clinical challenges can be identified, refined, and developed into functional solutions. Key concepts include problem identification, rapid prototyping, clinical validation, intellectual property considerations, pathways to commercialization, and communication strategies for presenting ideas to stakeholders. Attendees will participate in a guided exercise to identify and refine innovation opportunities within their own practice settings. This session equips OT practitioners with actionable tools to extend their impact beyond treatment and contribute to the development of practical, scalable healthcare solutions.

Short Course 5: Finding Our Rhythm as OT Practitioners: The Value of Intraprofessional Collaboration. Although the professional role of the OTA has been established since 1958, disparities between OT and OTA education, competencies, roles, and autonomy have led to a perceived lack of value for the OTA practitioner (3, 4). This was propagated in part by prior education standards that de-emphasize intraprofessional collaboration at the OT level. This course will examine not only how OT and OTA programs are working to change this narrative, but also strategies that current practitioners can implement to enhance the intraprofessional workspace through authentic collaboration.

Short Course 6: It Takes Two to Tango: Incorporating Cultural Humility into Occupational Therapy. The goal of this short course is to use current evidence to advance attendees' knowledge of cultural humility in a changing world. The course will include strategies to improve cultural humility as well as resources to help OTPs and students to advocate for themselves and others with the ultimate goal of progressing toward AOTA 2030 vision -- enriching life for all individuals.

Workshops

Workshop 1: Adult Neurological Upper Extremity Assessment Workshop. This workshop provides occupational therapy practitioners with practical, evidence-based strategies for conducting neurological assessments in adult populations. Participants will learn how to select and administer standardized assessment tools, interpret results accurately, and apply findings to clinical decision-making. Emphasis is placed on proper technique, reliability, and alignment with current best practice guidelines. Through guided instruction and hands-on practice, attendees will build confidence in evaluating individuals with a range of neurological conditions. The course supports clinicians in enhancing assessment accuracy, improving patient outcomes, and ensuring interventions are grounded in current evidence. Ideal for practitioners seeking to strengthen their neurological evaluation skills, this workshop bridges the gap between theory and real-world clinical application.

Workshop 2: So You Want to Work in the NICU? Clinical Foundations and Career Pathways for Occupational Therapists. This interactive workshop provides occupational therapy practitioners and students with an introduction to the specialized role of OT in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Participants will explore foundational concepts of neonatal therapy, including developmental care, sensory and neurobehavioral regulation, caregiver support, interdisciplinary collaboration, and common NICU interventions. Through case examples and discussion, attendees will gain insight into the day-to-day responsibilities and clinical



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

reasoning of NICU occupational therapists. The second portion of the workshop focuses on professional pathways into NICU practice, including fieldwork experiences, mentorship, continuing education, resume development, interviewing, and strategies for advocating for OT services within neonatal settings. Participants will leave with a greater understanding of the NICU OT role as well as practical guidance for pursuing a career in this highly specialized and rewarding area of practice.

Workshop 3: The "Not-so-Funny" Bone: Evidence-Based Evaluation and Treatment of Ulnar Nerve Compression. Ulnar nerve compression is frequently overlooked, misidentified, or masked by overlapping peripheral nerve impingement syndromes. In this interactive hands-on workshop, participants will develop practical clinical reasoning skills to differentiate cubital tunnel syndrome from Guyon's canal syndrome and other common "imposters." You will trace the neuroanatomy of the ulnar nerve as it winds between the ulna and the medial epicondyle of the humerus - which leaves clients with a less than 'humorous' condition (pun intended). Following the OT process, participants will work through the occupational profile and client history to identify vital clues related to symptom presentation and occupational performance deficits. Participants will practice focused screening and evaluation techniques and review the evidence for client-centered intervention strategies for conservative management of ulnar neuropathies across multiple practice settings. Restore your client's sense of humor by getting rid of a painful 'funny bone' for good!

Workshop 4: Tried & True Tips for ADLs: Adaptive Strategies That Work in Everyday OT Practice. When standard adaptive equipment falls short, OTs and OTAs must rely on creativity, clinical reasoning, and shared experience. This interactive session brings together occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and students to explore practical, real-world strategies for supporting ADL performance using compensatory techniques, adaptive equipment, and everyday household items. Focusing on upper and lower body dressing (including compression stockings), bathing, toileting, and grooming, the session highlights solutions drawn from diverse practice settings. Attendees will view live demonstrations of commonly used approaches and tools while gaining insight into adaptable, client-centered interventions. Designed to encourage collaboration, this session invites participants to contribute their own tips, product ideas, and clinical successes. Whether new to practice or experienced, attendees will leave with fresh perspectives and immediately applicable strategies grounded in the collective knowledge of the OT community.

Workshop 5: Keeping the Beat: Function-Focused Documentation in an AI-Driven World. This course equips practitioners with practical strategies to strengthen skilled documentation using a Function-Focused approach. Participants will explore the human factor in professional reasoning, apply key concepts from the OTPF to develop a Function-Focused Blueprint for documentation, and examine how effective documentation supports advocacy for the profession, clinicians, and clients. The course also explores Artificial Intelligence supports and promotes ethical, discerning use of AI in practice. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to create clear, skilled, and function-driven documentation that reflects clinical reasoning and communicates occupational therapy's distinct value. Participants will gain strategies to improve clarity, support reimbursement, enhance interdisciplinary communication, and confidently demonstrate the impact of occupational therapy services across practice settings.

Workshop 6: Challenging Behaviors in a Changing World: Utilizing Co-Regulation in Pediatric Therapy. Increased screen time, adverse childhood experiences, sensory processing differences, less time playing outside – the list of reasons why children are experiencing an increase in challenging behaviors seems to be ever growing. Occupational therapists are often left feeling like behavioral challenges interrupt the ability to provide skilled intervention. But we can use our training in neurodevelopment, interoception, task grading, and sensory integration to hone in on the foundation children and adolescents are often missing to build skills: feeling safe in their bodies. In the absence of internalized felt safety, children often utilize unexpected behaviors as a way to communicate fear, discomfort, or overwhelm. Participants in this workshop will learn how self-regulation skills are developed – and impacted by neurodevelopmental differences, lack of



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

consistent co-regulation from a caregiver, or complex trauma – and how to utilize a therapeutic alliance through co-regulation to build the foundation needed for more effective sessions.

Workshop 7: Occupational Therapy's Role in Postpartum Well-being. This workshop is the expansion of a doctoral capstone project exploring the role of occupational therapy in supporting postpartum well-being. Through the development of evidence-based educational resources, interdisciplinary collaboration, and advocacy efforts, the project aimed to address postpartum mothers' emotional, physical, and occupational needs while promoting the value of occupational therapy in postpartum care. This workshop aims to provide practitioners continued education regarding postpartum recovery barriers and evidence supporting increased OT involvement in maternal care. Additionally, evidenced-based interventions will be presented to address postpartum emotional, physical, and occupational needs through group discussion and hands-on application opportunities in small group experiences. Additionally, experiential learning opportunities will be provided to support practitioner confidence with advocating for OT services in this emerging and advanced practice area. Skills in advancing the practice of OT in postpartum care and advocating for the needs of clients and for the profession are the emphasis of the workshop.

Sunday, September 20, 2026

Short Courses

Short Course 7: Continuing the Conversation: Rhythm, Relationship, and Occupation. This interactive question-and-answer session expands upon the keynote presentation exploring collaboration between Occupational Therapy Practitioners (OTP) and Music Therapists (MT). Attendees will engage in guided discussion surrounding interdisciplinary collaboration, co-treatment considerations, clinical reasoning, ethical practice, and implementation strategies across a variety of populations and practice settings. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions related to scope overlap, therapeutic use of music within occupational therapy, sensory and emotional regulation, engagement, documentation, and barriers to collaborative practice. The session will encourage reflective dialogue and practical problem-solving while emphasizing holistic, client-centered, and participation-focused care. Literature supports the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and occupation-based interventions in enhancing client outcomes, engagement, and well-being across the lifespan (Case-Smith et al., 2015; Hammel et al., 2019; Stephens et al., 2023). This discussion-based session aims to strengthen attendees' confidence in navigating collaborative therapeutic relationships and developing innovative approaches that support meaningful participation.

Short Course 8: Live case dialogue: An innovative educational activity for assessing clinical reasoning in students. Clinical reasoning is an essential skill for occupational therapy students to develop in preparation for fieldwork and future clinical practice. Traditionally, clinical reasoning has been assessed through written case studies. However, increasing AI use makes it more difficult to determine students' independent understanding. Additionally, many students experience anxiety when an instructor asks them a question in front of peers, affecting their ability and confidence to respond. Despite these challenges, real-time clinical reasoning conversations are necessary in practice settings, highlighting the need for students to practice these skills within a controlled-stress environment. A live case dialogue is an innovative educational activity in which a small group of students and instructor engage in a structured conversation to assess the students' ability to clinically reason through a case. This presentation will describe the structure of the live case dialogue, discuss implementation benefits and challenges, and share student feedback regarding the learning experience.

Short Course 9: Rewiring Recovery: The Neuroscience of Structure, Skill-Building, and Occupational Therapy in Addiction Treatment. Substance use disorders significantly disrupt neurobiological functioning, impacting reward systems, executive functioning, and the ability to engage in meaningful occupations. While



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

traditional addiction treatment often emphasizes cognitive and emotional interventions, many individuals in recovery continue to experience difficulty translating insight into functional, daily behavior. This session reframes addiction through an occupational therapy lens, conceptualizing substance use as a form of occupational disruption characterized by impaired routines, habits, roles, and decreased occupational engagement. Participants will explore the neurobiological effects of substance use on the limbic system and prefrontal cortex, with emphasis on how these changes contribute to executive dysfunction and decreased occupational performance. The presentation will highlight the distinct and essential role of occupational therapy within interdisciplinary addiction treatment, including routine development, habit formation, executive functioning interventions, and re-engagement in meaningful occupations. Practical, occupation-based strategies will be provided to support implementation across recovery settings, including environments without direct OT services.

Short Course 10: Supporting Every Learner: Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Strategies for NBCOT Preparation. This session explores the application of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) principles to NBCOT preparation within occupational therapy education programs. Participants will examine how Tier 1 universal supports, Tier 2 targeted interventions, and Tier 3 individualized strategies can be adapted to support student success, wellness, engagement, and licensure readiness. Practical examples may include active learning strategies, embedded board-style activities, peer-led study groups, academic monitoring, faculty mentorship, individualized coaching, and wellness-informed supports. Current literature highlights the impact of academic performance, psychosocial factors, resilience, and student well-being on licensure success and retention within OT education (Avi-Itzhak & Krauss, 2010; Carson & Fisher, 2023; Jaffe et al., 2022). This session is intended for occupational therapy educators seeking proactive, holistic, and student-centered approaches to supporting NBCOT readiness and long-term professional success.

Short Course 11: Survey of Occupational Therapy Experts on Sleep: A Delphi Study. Sleep health represents a critical public health challenge in the United States, with one in three Americans reporting inadequate sleep regularly (1). Occupational therapy practitioners (OTP) are well-positioned to address poor sleep; however, current OT education programs allocate minimal instructional time to sleep (2). Additionally, there are no clinical guidelines or educational competencies for sleep assessment and intervention in OT education, resulting in inconsistent content delivery (2, 3). This presentation describes the results of a small Delphi study that sought to identify the knowledge areas essential for OTP to effectively address sleep health. Using 3 rounds of surveys, consensus was achieved among 11 international sleep experts. Attendees will gain insights about how they can use findings from the expert consensus to provide evidence-based care in the area of sleep health. OT educators can use the information to inform which aspects of sleep health are emphasized as part of OT education.

Short Course 12: Beyond the Clinic: Occupational Therapy utilizing Equine Movement & Environment utilizing Across the Lifespan. Hippotherapy refers to how occupational therapy practitioners use equine movement as a therapy tool within the scope of their practice to support functional outcomes and occupational performance. Supported by the American Occupational Therapy Association as a standard tool for trained OT practitioners, equine movement can be used in evidence-based practice to address neuroregulation, postural control, sensory processing, mobility, and engagement to help improve occupational performance and daily living skills. This session will introduce appropriate terminology, differentiate hippotherapy from other services integrating equines, and explore clinical applications across the lifespan. Participants will also examine barriers impacting access to care, including terminology inconsistencies, reimbursement limitations, and current advocacy efforts. The presentation will conclude with guidance on educational pathways, training opportunities, and professional development resources for OT practitioners interested in further training on the use of hippotherapy as a treatment tool.

Short Course 13: NBCOT® National Certification Exam: Information You Need to Know. (Student ONLY) During this session, an NBCOT Ambassador will share valuable information about preparing and applying for the national OTR and COTA certification exams. Specific topics include exclusive details about the exams, study tool resources, test day information, data regarding exam questions, and advice from other students and recent certificants. This presentation will allow



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

you to be better informed about the various aspects of the national certification exam experience. Connect with NBCOT and hear about the best approaches to achieve your goal for Occupational Therapy Certification.

Workshops

Workshop 8: Dark Occupations: When Meaningful Activity Causes Harm. Occupational therapy has long held that occupation is central to health and human identity. So what happens when a person's most meaningful activities are harmful, antisocial, or clinically non-sanctioned? This workshop introduces the concept of 'dark occupations' and offers a trauma-informed, interdisciplinary framework for engaging them in practice. Co-presented by an OT and an LPC, this session moves through four clinical populations: self-harm, eating disorders, substance use, and criminal activity, examining each as an occupation meeting genuine regulatory, relational, or identity-based needs. Participants will then explore a unified clinical framework organized around assessment, engagement, intervention, and therapist self, with practical tools drawn from an integrative toolkit. Throughout, the session addresses occupational identity, intersectional and justice considerations, and the moral discomfort clinicians often encounter in this work.

Workshop 9: Assistive Technology for the Occupational Therapist: Playing a New Role. Are you comfortable recommending 'adaptive equipment' for your clients but don't see assistive technology as part of your role? Surprise...it is! Adaptive equipment and assistive technologies are similar by definition and serve the same purpose, promoting independence with daily life tasks. For OT practitioners, it's like playing the same song...with different instruments. "For occupational therapy practitioners, AT is no longer a fringe specialization area involving a small fraction of our profession. As OT practitioners we have a shared responsibility to contribute to the assessment, recommendation, implementation, and training of AT that is appropriate for our clients (AOTA Position Statement on AT use in OT Practice). Join us as we explore the world of AT, look at differences and similarities between the two, and help you find your groove with this new role in the band.

Workshop 10: Handwriting Across the Lifespan: Linking Evidence-Based Components of Writing to Objective Measurement With the Kinetic Handwriting Analyst. Handwriting is one of the most complex skills occupational therapists address across the lifespan, yet it is often evaluated through the fine motor lens alone. This workshop examines the fine motor, cognitive, linguistic, and visual components that underlie handwriting and how these demands shift across copying, memory, dictation, and composition tasks. The workshop opens with a 60-minute foundational segment on the language, cognitive, and visual demands of writing across the four task types as we age, breaking down developmental/acquisition of skills, adolescence, adulthood, and older adulthood, with examples that bridge to occupational therapy evaluation practices. A 20-minute segment then addresses the limits of current norms and one research response to them. It examines why existing handwriting norms are insufficient given the breadth of underlying skills established in the foundational segment, and how recent shifts, including reduced handwriting instruction, increased device use, and pandemic-era disruption to early skill development, have widened the gap between available norms and present-day performance, most acutely for adults and older adults, where current data is thinnest. It then presents one example of how technology is being used to address this gap by building a normative database over time and across regions. An IRB-approved reliability study (Pearl IRB Protocol 2026-0256, approved May 27, 2026) is described strictly as reliability and normative-database research. The iPad-based kinetic measurement instrument used to collect the data is presented as a method only and is not offered for sale, demonstration-for-purchase, or promotion. A 15-minute segment helps to shift participants from concept to practice. Participants map the workshop framework onto a current case from their own caseload, identify which contributors to handwriting fall within their scope, and then engage in paired discussion and a full-group debrief, connecting scope clarity to the therapeutic use of self. The session closes with the last 10 minutes for processing any additional questions. Participants leave able to articulate the multi-domain research underlying handwriting, recognize where current norms fall short, and locate their genuine professional contribution with enough precision to practice from evidence and to protect against the burnout that follows from owning more than is therapeutically theirs.



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

Workshop 11: From Emotion to Goal-Directed Action: A Structured Framework for Mentoring and Advising the Struggling Student. Students commonly experience emotional overwhelm or difficulty integrating feedback as they develop clinical reasoning skills and occupational identity. While these challenges are a normal part of learning, remaining “stuck” can interfere with success in academic and clinical settings. Educators, capstone mentors, and fieldwork educators are often expected to respond in real time, yet there is a scarcity of structured frameworks and trainings to guide mentoring conversations and match support strategies to student needs. Co-taught by a licensed professional school counselor and OT educator, this interactive workshop introduces the Bergner RAPID-MAP (Reflect, Assess, Plan, Implement, Determine–Mentoring and Advising Pathfinder), an evidence-informed framework designed to move students from emotion toward reflective, goal-directed action. Integrating motivational interviewing, social-emotional learning, and occupation-centered mentoring strategies, participants will apply triage approaches, guided advising techniques, and growth mindset principles through hands-on cases. Leave this workshop ready to support students through positive, efficient and effective mentorship practices.

Workshop 12: Coaching Strategies for Occupational Therapy Practice: Supporting Follow-Through, Participation, and Behavior Change. Coaching is increasingly discussed within occupational therapy practice, yet definitions, training, and implementation approaches remain inconsistent. This workshop introduces coaching-informed occupational therapy as a collaborative approach that may support participation, carryover, self-efficacy, and behavior change across practice settings. Participants will examine how coaching differs from education, advising, and other directive intervention approaches commonly used in occupational therapy. Core processes used in coaching-informed interventions, including collaborative goal development, reflective questioning, client-led problem solving, and accountability structures, will be reviewed through case examples from pediatric and adult practice. Current evidence related to coaching in occupational therapy will also be discussed, along with scope of practice, fidelity, and ethical considerations relevant to implementation within occupational therapy services.

Workshop 13: Resumé Rescue Workshop. (Student ONLY). As occupational therapy evolves in response to shifting healthcare systems, workforce demands, and emerging practice areas, practitioners must clearly articulate their professional value (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2023; Flick & Napier, 2025). A strong resumé must reflect adaptability, growth, and alignment with a dynamic practice environment (Hiler, 2026). This interactive workshop helps participants “find their rhythm” by developing a cohesive, compelling professional narrative. Attendees will learn to translate clinical, academic, and leadership experiences into impact-driven language that resonates with prospective employers. Through guided exercises and peer feedback, participants will evaluate and revise their resúmes in real time, strengthening their ability to represent their skill set and goals in entering and progressing in the field of OT.

Poster Session #1 (Saturday)

Advocating for The Role of Occupational Therapy in Criminal Justice Reentry: An Educational Intervention for Interprofessional Staff. *Presenters:* Elizabeth Liposky, OTD and Don Lewis, OTD, MBA, MS, OTR

Correlation Between Sensory Processing and Social Function in Neurotypical Children aged 5-12. *Presenters:* Lorry Liotta-Kleinfeld, EdD, OTR, BCP, FAOTA and Cynthia Hickman, EdD, OTD, OTR/L, SIPT, CLT, LANA

Does Continuing Education Improve Energy Conservation Knowledge? Pretest–Posttest Findings From an OT Conference Session. *Presenters:* Lauren Beard, OTD, MOT, OTR/L and David Eades, PPOTD, OTR/L



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

Emotional Regulation and Skill Transfer Outcomes in Therapeutic Equine Services for Children with Autism and Trauma Histories. *Presenters:* John Finelli, OTS, Alex Beckemeier, OTS, Jackson Holbrook, OTS, and Stedmon Hopkins, OTD, MOT, OTR/L

Identifying Knowledge Gaps in Injury Prevention and Wellness Strategies Among Belmont University Instrumentalists. *Presenters:* LaRae Murray, OTD, OTR/L, Rosie Dunn, OTS, and Anna Stogner, OTS

Investigating Resources and Utilization and the Impact on Community Reintegration for Traumatic Brain Injury Survivors in the Greater Chattanooga Area. *Presenters:* Sara Lum, OTD, OTR/L, CBIS, CSRS, Jo Hembree, OTS, Cameron Jean, OTS, and Rebekah Biddle, OTS

Preparing Students for Success in OT Education Using Knowledge Bootcamps. *Presenter:* Kurt Hubbard, PhD, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA

Expanding Fieldwork Opportunities Through an Embedded Faculty Supervision Model. *Presenters:* Candace Thrash, OTD, OTR/L, BCP and Meegan Lambert, OTD, OTR/L, LMT

The Impact of an Aquatic Exercise Program on Self-Reported Balance and Confidence on Perceived Fall Risk. *Presenters:* Amanda Satcher, OTD, OTR/L, C/PAM and Dr. Whitney Dupree OTD, OTR/L

Chronic Pelvic Health Disorders and Occupational Therapy: The Impact on Quality of Life in Women. *Presenters:* Alexandra Lockmiller, OTS, Ashlyn Scott, OTS, Lauren Leuck, OTS, Shaye Martin, OTS, Madelyn Esquinance, OTS, and Rebecca Ahlfeld, PT, DPT, OTR/L, MOT

21st Century Ethics and the Use of AI in OT Education and Fieldwork. *Presenters:* Courtney Boren, MS, OTR/L and Brenda Kornblit Kennell, OTR/L, FAOTA,

Sensory Based Strategies Impacting Behavior and Engagement in Students in the Classroom from a Teacher's Perspective. *Presenters:* Emily Herbert, OTS, Grecia Moyers, OTS, Elle Jae Frazier, OTS, and Kerry Ormond, OTR/L

Bridging Clinical Practice in Occupational Therapy and Research: Enhancing Family and Caregiver Support in Pediatric Oncology. *Presenters:* Elizabeth Jackson, OTD and Dr. Kimberly Jessee, OTD, MS, OTR

Impacts of Social Determinants of Health on Infant Safe-Sleep Practices. *Presenter:* Jennifer Bolay, OTD, MEd, OTR/L, CNT, IBCLC, NTMTC

The Relationship Between Smartphone Use, Activity Participation, and Hand Strength. *Presenters:* Salem Swallows, OTS, Amanda Finke, OTS, and Rachel Pierce, OTS

Poster Session #2 (Sunday)

Home Modifications and Community Engagements That Support Social Participation in Children With Down Syndrome. *Presenters:* Megan Sayers, OTS, Teagan Schwall, OTS, Maggie Carter, OTS, Abigail Johnson, OTS, Savannah Lackey, OTS, and Kerry Ormond, MOT, OTR/L

Stakeholder Perspectives on Elopement Mitigation Strategies for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Presenters: Missy Bryan, OTD, OTR/L, BCP, ATP, CPST and Amanda Satcher, OTD, OTR/L, C/PAM

A Mixed Methods Approach to Inform OT Educators of Imposter Phenomenon In Occupational Therapy Students. *Presenters:* Kurt Hubbard, PhD, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA and Regan Deel, BS, OTS

A Pilot Study: Reducing Stigma Through Education: Impact of a Substance Use Disorder Training for Occupational Therapists in Central and Southern Appalachia. *Presenters:* Dr. Kimberly Masker, OTD, OTR/L, CHT, Katie Hill Moorefield, OTS, Charlotte Muharsky, OTS, and Hunter Tate, OTS

How do adults with physical disabilities perceive the impact of participating in adaptive sports on their overall quality of life? *Presenters:* Courtney Sneed, OTS, Kathryn LaMattina, OTS, Kiersten Harmon, OTS, Jaden Gross, OTS, and Rebecca Ahlfeld, PT, DPT, OTR/L, MOT

Preschool Teachers' Perspectives of Developmental Trends: A Qualitative Study. *Presenters:* Heather Compton, MOT, OTR/L and Alysha Skuthan, Ph.D., OTR/L, CWHS

Exploring the Difference Between Two VR Applications and a Traditional Mindfulness Activity for Stress/Anxiety Reduction. *Presenters:* Jessica Hackathorne, PhD, MOT, OTR/L, Gabriella Barnhart, OTS, Anna Davis, OTS, and and Elijah Hibbett, OTS

Musculoskeletal Disorders in American Sign Language Interpreters. *Presenter:* Dr. Brittany Nash

Do Occupational Therapy Services Improve Behavioral Regulation in K-5 Classrooms from a Teacher's Perspective? *Presenters:* Sydnee Duncan, OTS, Abigail Roberts, OTS, Abbey Barr, OTS, Kennedy Armstrong, OTS, Abby Cross, OTS, and Dr. Stedmon Hopkins, OTR/L

The Perceived Impact of Playing-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders on Musicians: Music. *Presenters:* Dr. Kathryn Halsted, Ellen Gaskill, OTS, Kylee Laws, OTD, Elizabeth Liposky, OTD, and Gabrielle Rambo, OTD

The Meaning and Impact of Participating in a Course that Used an Ungraded Approach. *Presenters:* Elena Wong Espiritu PhD, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR, Haleigh Hamlin Cadle, BS, OTS, Morgan T. Davis, BS, OTS, and Imani J. Hobson, BS, OTS

Occupational Therapy Roles in Supporting Law Enforcement Officers When Responding to Fatal Incidents. *Presenters:* Maggie Davidson, OTS, Kaitlyn Wallace, OTS, Kat Armstrong, OTS, and Hailee Ladd, OTS



Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association

Intervention and Prevention Strategies in Individuals with Playing-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders: A Systematic Review. *Presenters:* Dr. Kathryn Halsted OTD, MS, OTR/L, Cornisha Barnes, OTS, Caroline Carter, OTS, Eliza Cromer, OTS and Lydia Culbertson, OTS

FLOSS: Facilitating Learning of Sensory Strategies – An Occupational Therapy Approach to Oral Healthcare. *Presenters:* Hannah Dougherty, OTD, Don Lewis, OTD, MBA-HSC, MS, OTR, Tabitha Fair, RDH, BSDH, MPH, PhD, and Christy Isbell, PhD, OTR/L

Exploring Factors Influencing Interprofessional Education in Allied Health Programs. *Presenters:* Meegan Lambert, OTD, OTR/L, LMT, Mary Geders Falcetti, EdD, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA, and Prajakta Khare-Ranade, EdD, MSc, RDN, LD, CDCES, FAND

Association Between Cognitive Function and Physical Activity Among Residents in Assisted Living Facilities. *Presenters:* Anna Kiel, PhD, MS, MOT, OTR/L, Rachel Teti, BS, OTS, Ella Ensign, OTDS, Paisley Simmons, BA, OTS, and Sarah White, BS, OTS