OT SPARKS

Foundations for Practice

2027

PROGRAM GUIDE

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A PRACTICAL PLACE TO GROW AS AN OT

The step from knowing OT concepts to using them in busy, uncertain community practice takes time and support

Foundations for Practice is a ten-month program for OTs in their first 5 years of their practice. In a small group, you'll work through situations drawn from community OT, hear how others approach them and take practical ideas back to your work.

THE FORMAT

PRACTICE, DISCUSS, APPLY

One 90-minute session each month from March to December 2027. Sessions combine short teaching, realistic cases, group discussion and resources you can use at work.

WHO IT SUITS

EARLY-CAREER COMMUNITY OTs

Especially relevant to mixed caseloads, private practice and OTs who want structured learning alongside individual supervision

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

SKILLS YOU WILL DEVELOP

Across the year, you'll use real practice situations to strengthen your reasoning, communication and confidence as an OT

OUTCOMES:

WORK OUT WHAT MATTERS MOST

Learn to identify your clients occupational priorities, what you already know and what you still need to find out

MAKE AND EXPLAIN CLINICAL DECISIONS

Use assessment findings to set goals, plan intervention and document why you chose an approach

MANAGE THE WORK AROUND THE CLIENT

Prioritise competing tasks, communicate with other stakeholders and recognise when to seek supervision

LEARN FROM YOUR PRACTICE

Reflect on what happened, use feedback and decide what to try differently next time

WHAT INFORMS THE PROGRAM

The program is informed by the Australian occupational therapy competency standards (2018), Occupational Therapy Australia's Essential Supports for Early Career OTs (2025), and feedback from the 2026 pilot.

WHY TAKE PART?

WHAT PARTICIPANTS TAKE BACK TO PRACTICE

Each session gives OTs a chance to practice their thinking with others, then apply what they learned in their own work

PRACTICAL WAYS TO REASON

Use simple frameworks to sort through complex situations, identify priorities and decide what to do next

MORE CONFIDENCE EXPLAINING DECISIONS

Practice putting clinical reasoning into words for clients, colleagues, supervisors and reports

BETTER USE OF SUPERVISION

Notice where you need guidance and bring more focused questions and reflections to individual supervision

CONNECTION WITH OTHER OTs

Hear different approaches to familiar challenges and learn alongside people at a similar stage of practice

YOUR 2027 CALENDAR

PHASE 1 - ESTABLISH THE FOUNDATIONS

17 MAR

SESSION 01 - FINDING YOUR FEET

Work out what is expected of you, where your role begins and ends, and how to ask for the support you need.

14 APR

SESSION 02 - THE CASELOAD JUGGLE

Make realistic decisions about competing tasks, deadlines and the time clinical work actually takes.

12 MAY

SESSION 03 - SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

Communicate clearly with clients, families and colleagues, even when conversations are difficult.

16 JUN

SESSION 04 - INSIDE THE OT BRAIN

Make clinical reasoning visible and work through uncertainty

14 JUL

SESSION 05 - ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

Decide what you need to find out, then choose assessments that will help answer the question.

WEDNESDAYS | 12:30-2:00PM NSW TIME

YOUR 2027 CALENDAR

PHASE 2 - APPLY AND EXTEND

11 AUG

SESSION 06 - FROM FINDINGS TO GOALS

Bring together assessment findings and what matters to the client to develop goals that guide the work.

15 SEP

SESSION 07 - THE NEXT RIGHT STEP

Plan intervention and document the reasoning behind decisions

13 OCT

SESSION 08 - WHO DOES WHAT?

Collaborate with clients, families and other professionals while keeping the OT role clear.

10 NOV

SESSION 09 - LEARNING FROM THE WORK

Use cases, feedback and reflection to develop confidence

08 DEC

SESSION 10 - WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Recognise the skills you have built and make a practical plan for the next stage of your OT development.

WEDNESDAYS | 12:30-2:00PM AEST

HOW IT WORKS

WHAT DOES A SESSION LOOK LIKE?

Each session introduces a practical idea, then gives you time to use it with a realistic case and discuss different approaches. You'll leave with one idea to try in your work or bring to supervision.

START WITH A REAL WORLD CHALLENGE

We begin with a situation early career OTs commonly encounter

LEARN A PRACTICAL APPROACH

Explore a practical way to work through the situation and decide what to do next

WORK THROUGH A CASE TOGETHER

You apply the approach, explain your thinking and hear how other OTs would proceed

DECIDE WHAT TO TAKE BACK TO YOUR WORK

Choose one action to try, or a question to bring to your individual supervision

HOW CAN I ATTEND?

Online access will be available for every session. A Newcastle face-to-face option is planned; venue and attendance details will be confirmed.

WAYS TO JOIN

CHOOSE YOUR LEVEL OF ACCESS

Join for the full year to develop alongside the same small group, or book selected sessions that match your current learning needs.

FULL PROGRAM | $765 + GST

Includes all 10 sessions, plus one 30 minute complimentary supervision session with Sarah, to use in 2027 at the OTs discretion, subject to booking availability

3-SESSION PASS | $243 +GST

Select available sessions during 2027 and book each place in advance

SINGLE SESSION | $90+GST

Available for nominated sessions, subject to availability

FINAL YEAR STUDENT | $25+GST PER SESSION

The last three sessions will welcome final year OT students. Placement experiences can be used in case discussions and reflection, with activities adapted for the transition into practice

ABOUT THE FACILITATOR

MEET SARAH SMITH

Sarah graduated with honours from the University of Newcastle in 2005 and has worked in community occupational therapy practice for more than 21 years. Her current clinical work focuses on complex home modifications, assistive technology, driving assessment and OT supervision



WHY THE PROGRAM WAS CREATED

Support for the decisions that come with practice

Sarah created Foundations for Practice to give early career OTs regular time to work through real cases, learn with peers and build confidence in their clinical decisions

FIND OUT MORE - EXPLORE THE 2027 PROGRAM

Scan the QR code for session details, enrolment information and answers to common questions
ssoccupationaltherapy.com/foundations-for-practice