

Occupational therapy in the workplace The link between disability and functioning!

With October now here, we mark another Occupational Therapy Month. This year the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists (OSOT) is running a campaign to highlight what occupational therapists do.



Occupational therapy—the link clients need

You can access the campaign on Instagram (#thisOTcan) or Facebook (@thisOTcan). Adeena Wisenthal of ERGO-Wise will be among the occupational therapists that are highlighted.

This past year has been a busy year for Adeena and ERGO-Wise. Here are some of our accomplishments which translate into improved service delivery to clients who are our number one focus:

- Adeena completed her doctoral studies and received her PhD degree in

Rehabilitation Science from Queen's University in June 2016.

- As part of her doctoral work, Adeena researched the effectiveness of cognitive work hardening (CWH) in preparing disability claimants to return to work following depression. Her findings support CWH as an effective return-to-work (RTW) intervention.
- Adeena's research builds on the established evidence-base of work hardening by providing empirical data on its application to the mental health domain.
- In addition to her doctoral dissertation, Adeena has written scholarly papers presenting her research results and is awaiting their publication in peer-reviewed journals.
- Scholarly papers written by Adeena already published in academic journals have discussed CWH as an occupational-based treatment intervention that prepares people to return to work. Her papers have introduced CWH to the field of RTW research as well as to the clinical world.



Adeena Wisenthal, PhD, M.Ed., OT Reg. (Ont.) is a registered occupational therapist and founder of ERGO-Wise. She specializes in helping people on mental health related disability leave get back to work.

Adeena's doctoral research confirms a clinical approach that won her the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists' Innovative Practice Award.

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Uniqueness of ERGO-Wise's cognitive work hardening (bridge2work™) program

* Innovative program offered in Ottawa since 2000

- ⇒ client-centered
- ⇒ customized to individual needs
- ⇒ simulated work setting

* Evidence-based: significant improvement in self-report measures

- ⇒ work ability
- ⇒ fatigue
- ⇒ depression severity

Occupational therapy

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Our clients

- Disability claimants on a mental health disability (e.g., depression), have continued to successfully prepare for return to work through ERGO-Wise's CWH.
- Other disability claimants have also benefited from CWH. These include people with medical conditions with cognitive sequelae and stamina issues such as cancer survivors and those with post-concussion.
- More disability claimants are benefiting from CWH as it is becoming better known by insurers as well as by doctors and psychologists who are asking for this intervention for their patients.

Occupational therapy

The field of occupational therapy has grown over the years. It has moved from the hospital and clinic to community-based settings and the workplace where foundational principles of occupational therapy naturally apply. These include:

- the profession's focus on engagement in meaningful occupation and its impact on health and well-being

- the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model that focuses on the transactional nature of the person with his/her occupation and roles within the context of the environment
- the view that one's mental health is interwoven with one's physical health

Adeena - the occupational therapist

Adeena is passionate about occupational therapy and its role in everyday living. Specifically, Adeena is proud to be working in the field of return-to-work where she sees firsthand the transformation of her clients from focusing on their disability to re-establishing a worker identity ready to resume their worker role.

Adeena is thrilled to be contributing to the expanding role of occupational therapy in the workplace. Whether it is as a clinician, through her direct contact with clients in their return-to-work journeys, or through her research which is helping to bridge the clinical world with scientific study, Adeena is promoting best practices for improved treatment outcomes.



return-to-work duty to accommodate coaching
workplace mental health adapting to change
 at work issues **cognitive work hardening**
 coping skills **increase functioning** counselling
 communication improve bottom line assertiveness
reduce disability time management ergonomics

