

In Her Own Words Beth Bright's Experience on Student Training

By Beth Bright

Providing care to geriatric patients requires passion, commitment to providing loving care and determination to always strive for excellence. Based on my experiences at several local facilities and interactions with corporate associates, I can say with confidence that Life Care Centers of America encompasses all of these qualities.

Another factor that drew me toward working with Life Care during my residency was my passion to see the best quality of care provided to skilled and long-term care residents. The rehabilitation team is striving to stay cutting edge by providing evidence-based practice, state-of-the-art facilities and



promoting continuing education for all therapists. In addition, the collaboration between nursing, administration, IT and rehabilitation services to maintain an open line of communication is an area where Life Care shines.

However, like most departments, therapists and corporate rehab associates are always faced with new challenges. The changes in Medicare reimbursement towards an outcome-based system and increasing number of patients on caseload keeps therapists on their toes.

As changes in legislation, reimbursement and the push for evidence-based practice approaches, there is a shift taking place in the educational standards for students aspiring to earn a degree in occupational therapy. The new doctoral program provides additional coursework and an experiential component at the culmination of each student's educational and fieldwork experience.

At Belmont University, where I am currently a third-year student, this component is called a residency. The purpose of the residency is to provide each student with the opportunity to experience an area of interest in a way that is above and beyond a rotation in an advanced practice area. For me, this meant exploring the use of occupation-based interventions and client-centered care in skilled nursing facilities. As a residency student at Life Care Centers of America, I have grown both personally and professionally. One of my objectives was to evaluate specific statistics of patients receiving occupational therapy services. The results were intended to identify the frequency of goal-directed interventions and the use of occupation-based activities.

The second portion of my residency was to investigate the use of evidence-based practice in the field of occupational therapy.

This objective required the support of several corporate associates, therapists at Life Care Center of Cleveland, Tenn., and a professor at Belmont University to assist in research and design of evidence-based occupational therapy interventions for the Center of Evidence, a four-sided kiosk representing the four most commonly billed CPT codes for physical therapists.

The COE contains assessments, intervention tools and protocol sheets for each activity/exercise. This product provides therapists with an easy-to-use system for

applying evidence-based interventions in several areas of practice. Dr. Carole Lewis is a leader in the field of physical therapy, avid researcher and the creator of the Center of Evidence. With her guidance and recommendation, I have designed several evidence-based occupational therapy interventions for her product. Starting in May, the interventions will be implemented, and their effectiveness in the clinic will be assessed.

This experience of earning my doctorate in occupational therapy has been extraordinary. I have gained an in-depth understanding of current treatment methods used in five skilled nursing facilities and established areas of further research. In the future, I will strive to provide client-centered, occupation-based and evidence-based care in skilled nursing facilities.

I understand that a student speaking

about quality of care and proposing ways to improve the use of client-centered care may not be well received. However, a quote by Eric Chapman in his book *Sacred Work: Planting Cultures of Radical Loving Care in America* summarizes my passion to see change in the care delivered in skilled nursing facilities. Chapman states, "The only way to fail the challenge, the test of life itself, is not to take it - to retreat to the grandstands and watch passion playing out on the great field below." (p. 158)

References

Chapman, E. (2009). *Sacred Work: Planting Cultures of Radical Loving Care in America*. Nashville, TN: Vaughan Printing Company.

Associate Accomplishment

Eloise Busby, PT, GCS, at Life Care Center of East Ridge, Tenn., recently received a prestigious honor from the Tennessee Physical Therapy Association. Busby works directly with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga as a mentor to physical therapy students, providing hands-on experience to supplement textbook knowledge gained in the classroom. To honor Busby's dedication and commitment to students' learning, the university nominated Busby for the TPTA's Clinical Instructor of the Year award. Busby's service to the students earned her the award at an April TPTA meeting in Nashville, Tenn. Originally from the Dominican Republic, Busby has certainly made an impact in her local community and continues the standard of excellence at Life Care Center of East Ridge.

