
Statement on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) represents the needs and interests of more than 230,000 occupational therapy practitioners and students in the United States. Established in 1917, AOTA is a national association that supports the occupational therapy profession in the areas of advocacy, policy, professional development, and practice-related matters.

AOTA fully recognizes the need for well-being and resiliency, as well as the reality of practitioner burnout and its heightened presence during the public health emergency.

As schools and clinical settings closed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, occupational therapy practitioners initially faced challenges surrounding delivery of care and developing short- and long-term strategies to provide continued care, amid maintaining personal responsibilities for themselves and their families (Shreffler, 2020). To combat this stressor, the AOTA quickly produced COVID-19 resources that addressed mental health, anxiety, and working from home to aid in practitioner well-being, decrease burnout and sustained client care. As the pandemic contributed to practitioner burnout, notable incidents of inequality have glaringly highlighted the perils of racism and its effect on communities of color.

Systemic racism continues to be a plaguing issue that should be declared a public health crisis, as there is a linkage between racism and health (Brody et al., 2014). Experienced and witnessed racism for both practitioners and the clients they serve contributes greatly to burnout and underlines the need to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and tackle racial disparities in health care.

The AOTA is addressing DEI efforts by providing a platform for members to express their experiences dealing with racism and discrimination. Multiple listening sessions led to a larger initiative to generate articles, create educational seminars, form a DEI Task Force, and develop a DEI Toolkit to provide much needed resources to use in practice, academic and clinical settings.

The stressors of the job, combined with the practitioner's own personal factors, can directly influence how one copes, not only on the front line, but in everyday life. Sustaining a healthy workforce, particularly, in a health care setting, can enhance the quality of patient care and personal well-being (Epstein et al., 2013). Cultivating the skills to employ resilience is key to obtaining balance in and out of the workplace and the AOTA has dedicated a page on its website featuring tools and webinars on practitioner well-being and burnout and plans to develop a podcast series centering on wellness topics.

AOTA fully supports the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being's mission and goals in addressing clinician well-being and burnout. AOTA remains committed to identifying the chief indicators of burnout by supporting the workforce through continued research and resources, such as the AOTA-produced [decision guide on practitioner well-being](#) (2020). In addition to strategically tackling racial bias, providing recommendations to address this ongoing concern while simultaneously promoting well-being and increased resiliency in occupational therapy practitioners remain top priorities for the Association.

References

- American Occupational Therapy Association (2020). [AOTA Decision Guide: Practitioner Well-Being](#). Retrieved February 2020.
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- Shreffler J, Petrey J, Huecker M. The Impact of COVID-19 on Healthcare Worker Wellness: A Scoping Review. *West J Emerg Med.* 2020;21(5):1059-1066. Published 2020 Aug 17. doi:10.5811/westjem.2020.7.48684.