

My why for pursuing a post-professional doctoral degree is that my eighteen-year-old self, made a promise to my father after becoming a young mother, I assured him that a change in my plan wouldn't stop me from pursuing my educational pursuits; rather, it shaped my reason for becoming an occupational therapy assistant. My son Kameron was born with a genetic mutation that caused dwarfism. Due to his condition and an occupational therapist treating him in the Birth to Three program, I found an interest in the profession and saw the results of her coaching model and techniques to improve his motor and adaptive development. Thus, my love for the field of occupational therapy began.

I resonated with the passage in the article by Cerrone (2018), in which they stated that experiences that provide learning opportunities are never "just isolated events in time; rather, learners must connect what they have learned from current experiences to those in the past as well as see possible future implications" (Cerrone, 2018). As a treating therapist for the past twenty years and in my newly educational support role, I find the events that cause me to question "why is this happening and why now?" are what pique my interest in professional development pursuits, continuing education, and adult learning. As an adult learner the strengths I possess are being highly motivated, determined and having positive mindset when challenges arise. My barriers of time management, having many responsibilities, work/life balance are all things that I am navigating to be successful (Cerrone, 2018).

It is my hope that upon completing the OTD program, this will allow me to complete my quest of pursuing a doctoral degree. I aspire to finish my occupational therapy career as an educator at the collegiate level; and this may be an option with my current employer. I am a big proponent of becoming a part of my community and would like to use the leadership and advocacy skills that will be learned because of the program to further my passion for community services in non-traditional roles. I believe that the future of our profession is thinking outside of the box and pursuing roles to advocate for the principles that our profession was built on and evolving them to meet current societal demands. As AOTA states in Vision 2025, we are "an inclusive profession that maximizes health, well-being, and quality of life for all people, populations, and communities through effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living" (AOTA, 2021). Utilizing the framework of advocacy expands the "capacity for the profession and professionals to be successful advocates" (AOTA, 2021) and transforms by "increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within all areas" (AOTA, 2021).

References:

AOTA. (2021, June). *AOTA strategic framework*. [2021-aota-strategic-framework.pdf](#).

Cercone, K. (2008). Characteristics of adult learners with implications for online learning design. *AACE Journal*, 16(2), 137-159.