

Episode: 15**Title: Navigating paediatric OT professional development: Unlocking Growth****Hosts: Mahek Bansal & Larissa Ferrari****Mahek Bansal**

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to the New PossibilOTs podcast. Larissa and I are so happy to be back with you for another episode. Today, we thought we would talk about our tips and ideas and, clinical reasoning for choosing a professional development course or finding training and extra learning to support people who are maybe new to paediatrics or new graduates. The first few months, years, even especially, can be overwhelming sometimes. There's so much to learn, so it can be hard, to find a place to start. So Larissa and I thought we might just share some of our ideas and suggestions for you.

Larissa Ferrari

Yeah, and I totally agree when you say, how complex it is working in paediatrics and we've mentioned that in our previous episodes, and even when you're working for a long time in paediatrics, it might be that your caseload were very similar, and then you changed to a different case load or you changed to a different practice that has different clients. And all of a sudden, you're questioning your reasoning, your clinical expertise, and you're like, okay, I need to learn more about this. So I think that this always happens to us, and it's always good to know places that we can look at or some strategies apart from these very long, expensive courses that you cannot always go to. And I think we have some good tips for that. Mahak.

Mahek Bansal

Yes, so thinking about where to start if you feel like you want to get some extra training, and as OTs, we always want to have that curiosity to want to know more. And it's also a requirement of our practice here in Australia - we have a requirement under our registration to maintain a certain number of hours of professional development. So we know that we want to do something but where do we start Larissa?

Larissa Ferrari

Yes, my first thought it would be, think of your caseload. Think of what the main needs or the urgent needs; you have to get a better expertise, or you want to know more about it, or you want to know what other people are doing about it. And then start with this. We are very curious, and usually most of the OTs that I know, if not all of them, love what they do. And that might get us to want to know everything. But don't go there. Just focus on what's urgent, what you really want to know right now, or improve your knowledge right now, and then start slow. That would be my first thing.

Mahek Bansal

My first tip would be to look for places that you can get a little bit more informal knowledge or training or education. So courses can be amazing. They're such a wealth of knowledge, but they can be time consuming and expensive, and that can be worth the money. They're often worth the money, but we can't spend that much time and money always. So things like books, podcasts, blogs, there are amazing resources out there that can help us sort of

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get started on our learning. If there's an area specifically that you're interested in, maybe look for some evidence based books or podcasts that explore that topic and you can get started.

And if you feel like you've really harnessed your interest in that area and you've got the foundational knowledge now, then maybe the next step can be looking into a more formal course that can outline and provide more skills for that.

Larissa Ferrari

Added to that Mahek I know that some big topics, for example, feeding, they have amazing courses around, but they can be quite different from each other. And when you're not sure about what they are going to dive into, you just know they're going to approach feeding, but how exactly? Then it's always good to go through the resources you're suggesting. Like podcasts, even social media nowadays, OTs are talking so much through Facebook communities and things like that. And then try to understand a little bit more about what's involved in these different courses so maybe you can make a better decision before paying for it and committing to it. So I really like your tip for this purpose, and that's usually what I do. I try to check who's presenting the course, what they're trained on, what people were talking about this course.

I reach out to my OT friends and ask if they've done that course before. And these are all ways of making a better choice when it comes to these amazing but time consuming and expensive courses. My other tip, would be to maybe if reading journals and papers are a little bit too hard for you again, try to find podcasts or blog posts that break these researches into very conversational topics. That might be a good way for you to get familiar with getting into evidence based, but maybe you don't have the time. You're not much very into reading these long papers, or you don't know how to break these papers just to get the best out of it. But I'm pretty sure there are few podcasts around that can do that for you, and that's a good training as well.

You can learn not only about the technique you're looking for, but also how to go into researchers with more practicality.

Mahek Bansal

My next tip, especially for new grads or people new to paediatrics, is to start with more general courses or training, something that's going to sort of have a bit of a more overview and a bigger picture lens to give you a bit more of the foundational knowledge. I think it's hard to know as someone new to the field of what's going to be relevant to our practice, what are we going to be able to. The last thing you want to do is do a course and then not be able to really implement it because it's not really relevant or you don't have the time, the resources in the practical setting that you're in.

So it's better to start with courses that are more general around a big topic like sensory

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processing, emotional regulation, or even just an overview of assessments in paediatrics, intervention approaches in paediatrics, just to get you to start thinking about a bigger picture. And as you have more clinical experience, you can start reflecting on the tools and resources that you're using more or the things that you have a need for in your client caseload that you don't feel confident with and you want more training in. And once you have that sort of foundational bigger picture, it might make it easier to identify those things going forward.

Larissa Ferrari

That is a great tip, Mahek, And I could think of something else following that tip that you just gave is that probably find someone that you could schedule some sessions, a professional that really works in a mind like what you think. Try to ask if you could schedule some sessions, if the clients or family of the clients give consent for you to be part of the session and learn through practice, through observing someone practicing, or even if that's not possible, to try to organize some supervision, even if it's monthly, fortnightly, or weekly, if you can. But supervision is also a great way to get someone to help you with your doubts or to give you that confidence to practice something that you're not very familiar with. That would be my tip following yours.

Mahek Bansal

Sometimes it can be hard to find where to find these courses and trainings and things like that. My tip for that would be to think about often the registration bodies that you're governed by. They have a lot of trainings and courses that they provide or to even look at who are the experts in the field that you are wanting to get more training in and then researching the courses that they provide. Do you have any other suggestions? Larissa?

Larissa Ferrari

Adding to that accessibility of information that you're talking about, there are a lot of researchers that you might think that you cannot have access because you're not linked to the uni or you have to pay, but they're actually free in some of the websites and platforms. Or even if you go straight to the author and ask for that research mostly, from my experience, a lot of the times they were more than happy to share that resource with us. So you can have access to some papers and journals for free if you really look for the specific paper you'll want to read.

Mahek Bansal

Yeah, and a little tip for that is I use Google Scholar and it shows me the ones that are free and it gives me the link directly. So it's easy then to just go through and see which papers I can just access without having to have a subscription.

Larissa Ferrari

I think there was a lot of tips to start with, and if people are still curious about more, they

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can always contact us through our social media or website. We would be more than happy to continue helping people to find amazing CPDs.

Mahek Bansal

So until next time, please feel free to connect with us. Also share if you've had experience with some great CPD courses, please share or podcasts or blogs and things like that. And then, until next time, Larissa and I look forward to continuing to connect with you. Bye.