

Developing Socio-Political Praxis in Occupational Therapy

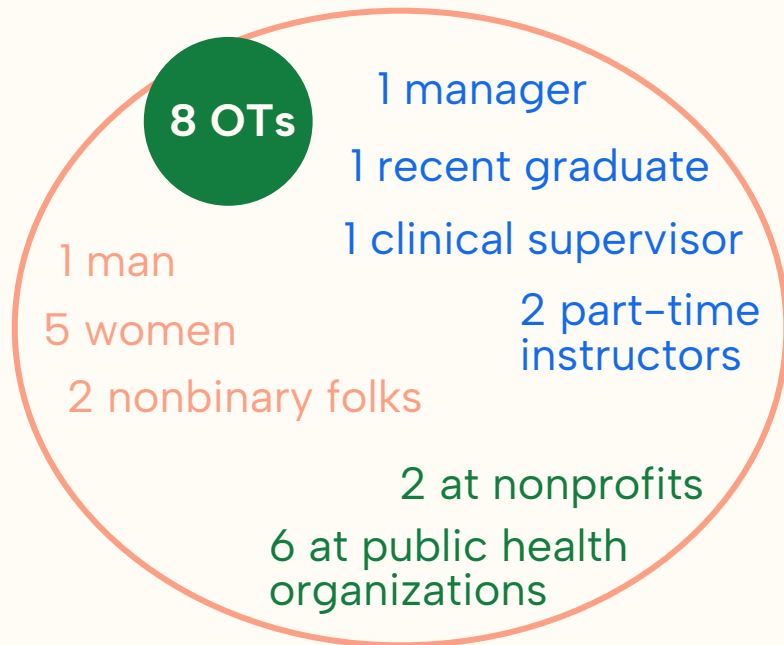
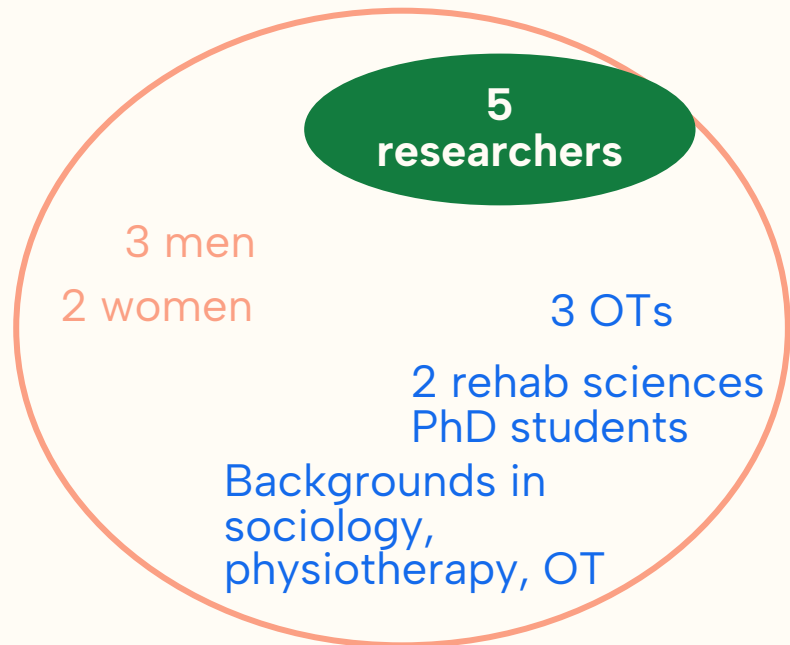
Presented by: Rebecca Alley^{1,2} & Sarah Hamill^{1,3}

With Frankie Chan³, Monica Hoang³, Rachel Krisa³, Amanda Mah⁴, Jennifer Sadowski³, Diana van der Stoel⁵, Erin Tichenor¹, Eduan Breedt¹, Gayla Grinde¹, Pier-Luc Turcotte⁶, & Tim Barlott¹

¹University of Alberta; ²Boyle Street Community Services; ³Recovery Alberta; ⁴Assisted Living Alberta; ⁵Bissell Centre; ⁶University of Ottawa

Our Team

- Settlers in what is now known as Canada
- Team members who are racialized, living with chronic mental and physical illness, neurodivergence, and other intersections of identity



Our Practice Contexts



- Locations:
 - Inner-city community center, transitional housing, long-term housing (all ages)
- Population health concerns:
 - Addictions
 - Mental illness
 - Developmental and intellectual disability
 - Chronic physical illness/disability
 - Trauma
- Socio-economic conditions:
 - Decreased funding for programs
 - Cuts to government disability benefits
 - Overloaded healthcare system
 - Institutional racism against Indigenous individuals/communities

Theoretical underpinnings

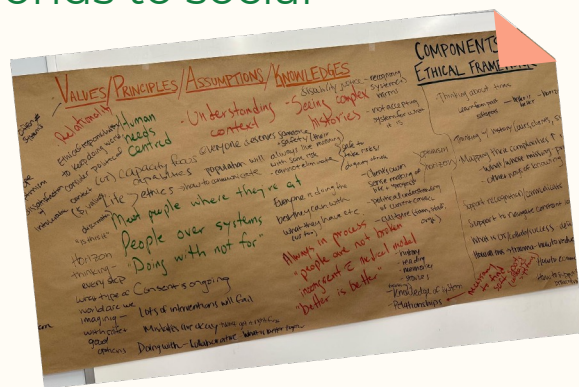
- Drawing from Aldrich & Rudman's (2020) framing of occupational therapists as "street-level bureaucrats" (originally conceptualized by Lipsky in 1980)
 - As occupational therapists, how might we also be "street-level theorists"?

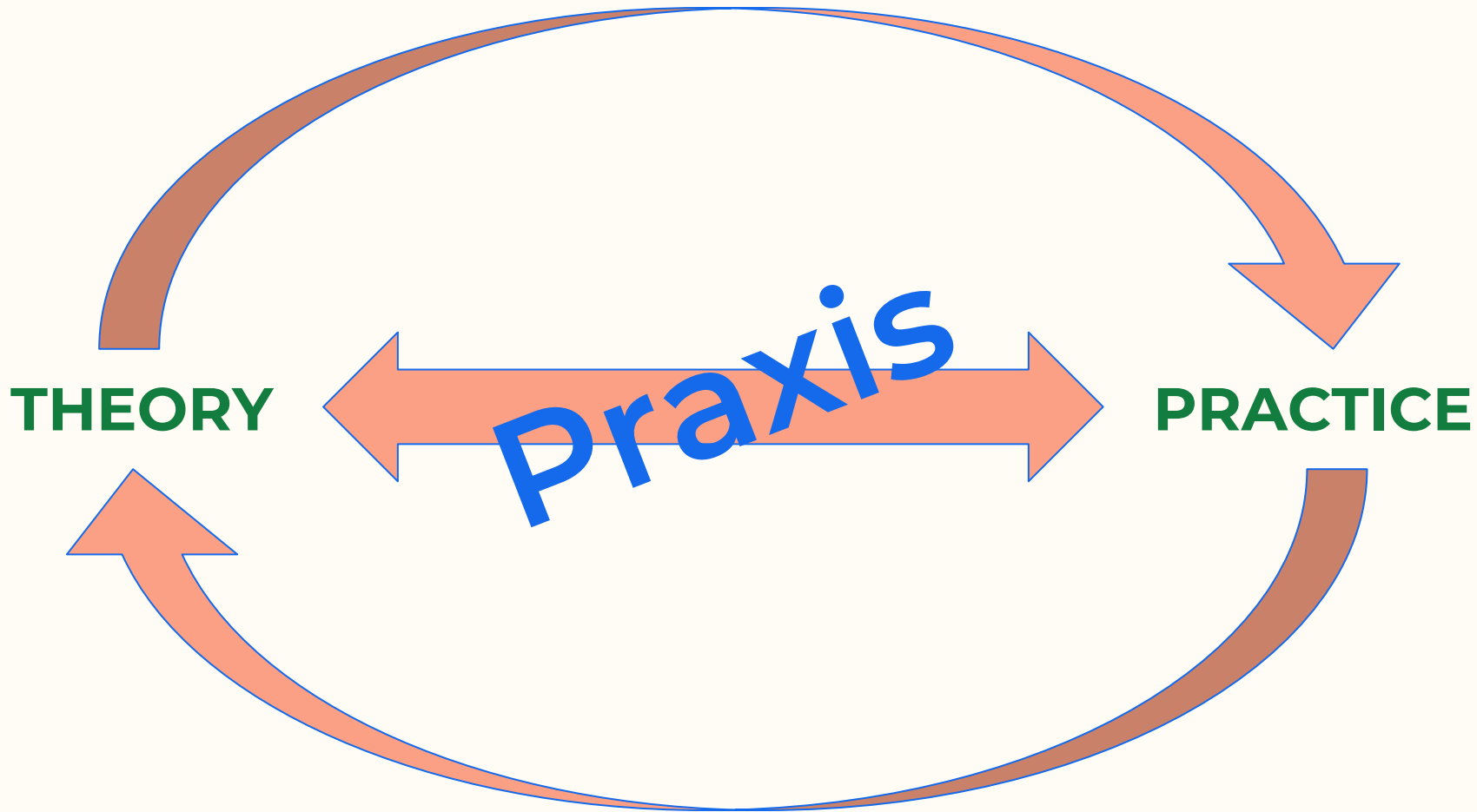
"...the issue is not whether occupational therapists ought to choose between apolitical or political framings of practice; rather, it is a question of how to help practitioners foreground the ways in which they already function as political actors."

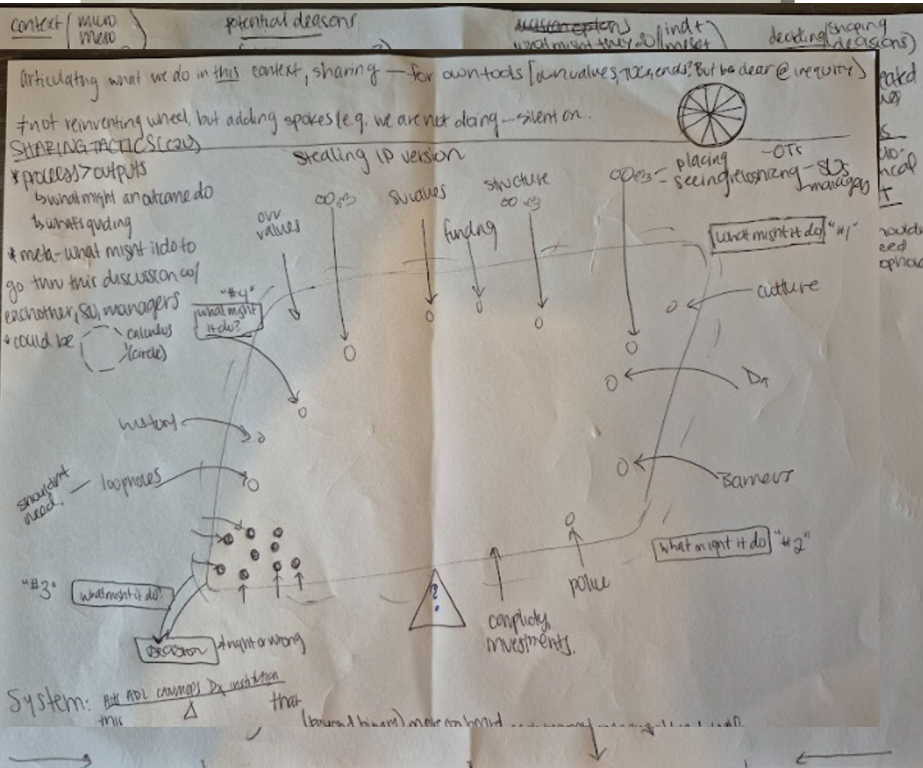
(Aldrich & Rudman, 2020, p. 138)

Our Process

- Iterative workshops
 - Series of 8 workshops over 6 months
 - Each workshop built on the previous one
- Identified goals for our work:
 - “We aim to develop/create an ethical framework for socio-political praxis for an occupational therapy that responds to social inequality”
 - Explicitly describing how and why we practice in our contexts of sociopolitical injustice, and identifying values, principles, ethics, and knowledges needed in our framework.







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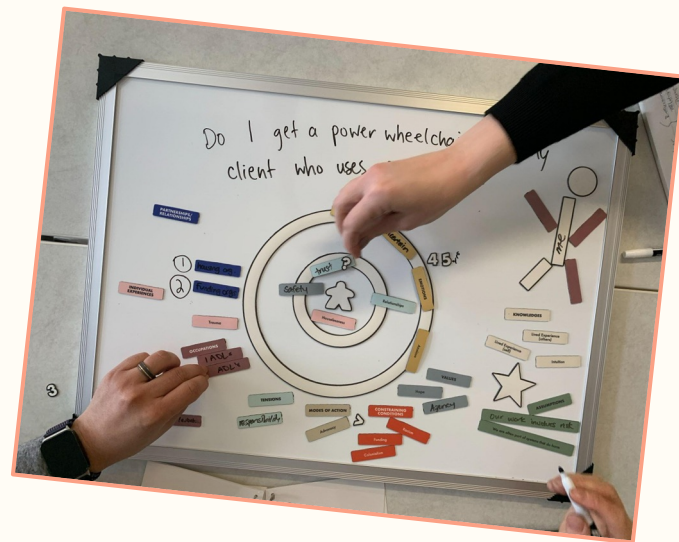
Magnet Toolkit

What is it?

- Set of prompts and words
 - Provide a semi-structured way for OTs to theorize a situation
 - Encourage consideration of all aspects of sociopolitical context, including ones that may not usually be thought of

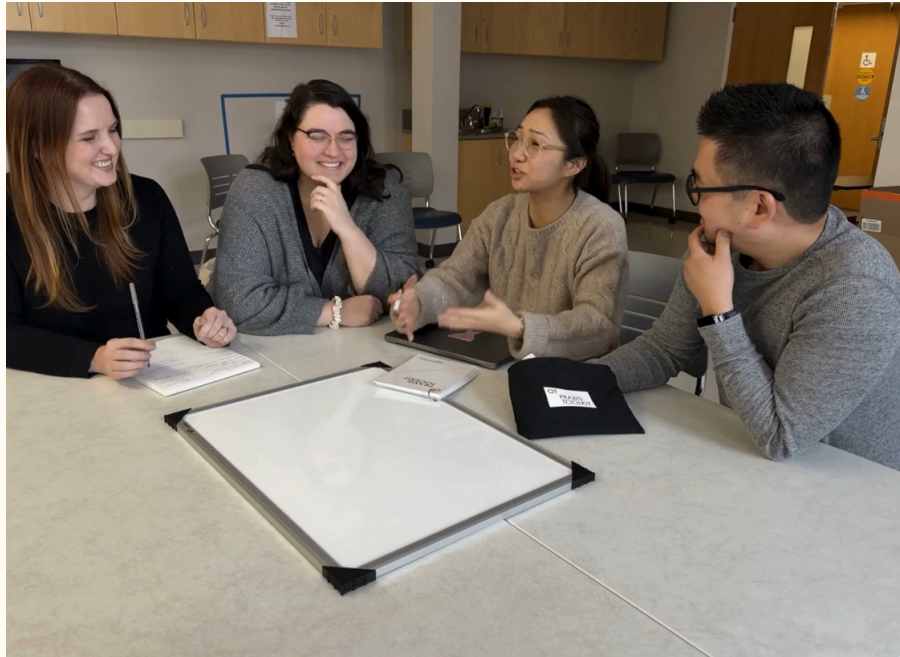
Why magnets?

- Flexible tool - can move concepts around to fit different situations
- Allows collaborative problem-solving
- Supports clinicians to engage in ethical decision-making and brave practice, rather providing than a single “right” answer
- Engaging OTs in **praxis** - encouraging clinicians to be part of the theory they are using and build theory that works for their context



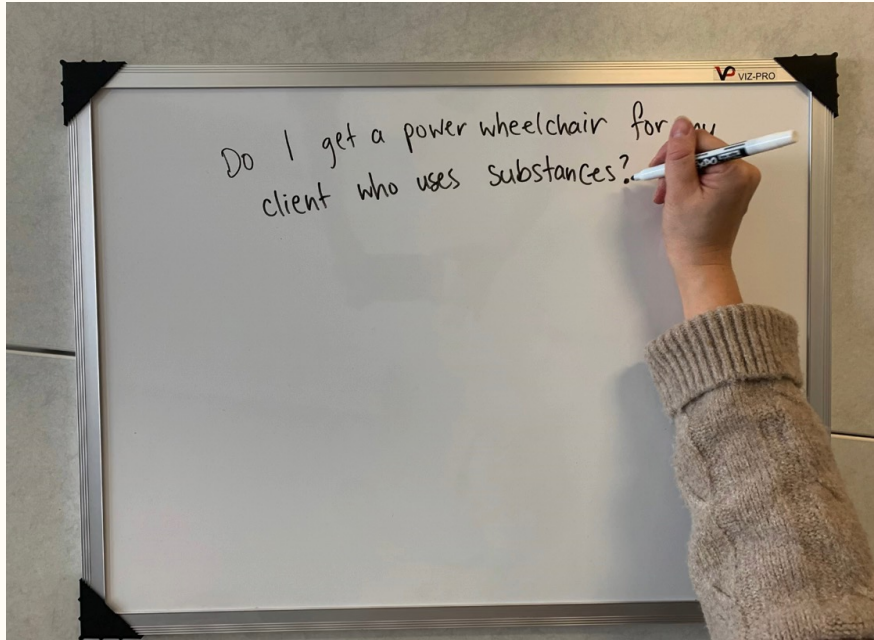
Guided Process

Step 1: Decide on a goal for the activity. *eg. a dilemma or case study*



Guided Process

Step 2: Use magnets to identify key factors in the situation



Examine values,
assumptions,
beliefs, knowledges

Reflect on
assumptions about
self and context

Explore macro,
meso, and micro
contexts

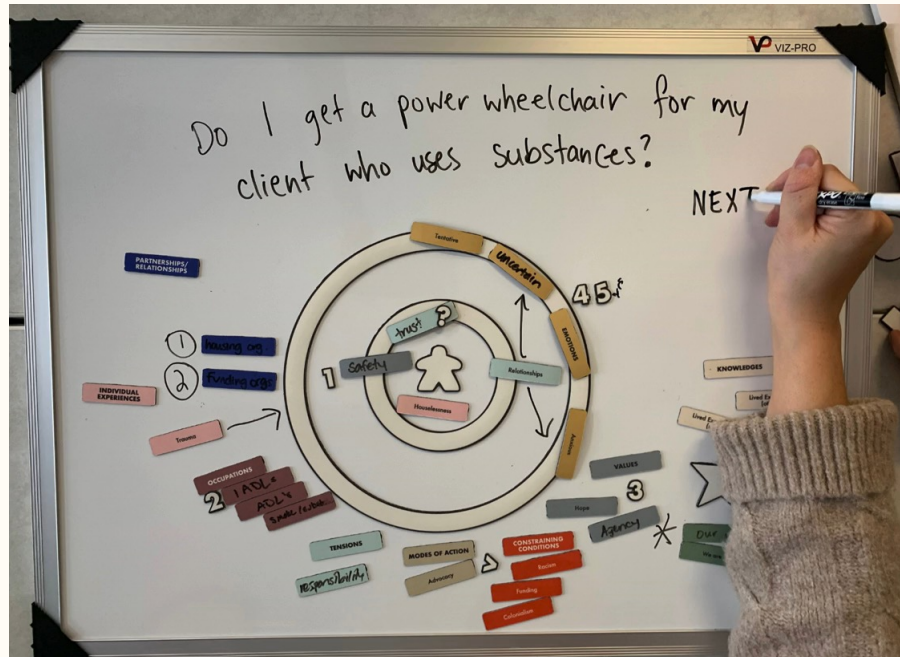
Guided Process

Step 3: Identify tensions and relationships between these factors



Guided Process

Step 4: Identify next steps and priorities



Consider your practice context:

What values or principles:

- a. Are being prioritized in this situation?
- b. Do we want to prioritize in our reflection and responses?
- c. Are influencing my priorities, goals, or agendas?





Questions?

For more information:
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Toolkit completed with
 design support from Action
 Lab (www.actionlab.ca)

