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2026 FOR REGISTRANTS.

DATE AND TIME

Sat, July 11, 2026
9:00am to 3:15pm

Register Online

<https://otac.site-ym.com/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=2065822&group=>

QUESTIONS?

Contact OTAC staff:
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Agenda – 9:00am to 3:15pm – Earn 4.25 PDUs

- 9:00am – 9:15am** Welcome/Agenda Overview
- 9:15am – 10:30am** KEYNOTE: Making Research Matter: Partnership and Participation – *Sheryl J. Ryan, PhD, OTR/L*
- 10:30am – 10:45am** BREAK
- 10:45am – 11:45am** Addressing Occupations in Family-Centered Care – *Aaron Bonsall, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L*
- 11:45am – 12:45pm** LUNCH ON OWN
- 12:45pm – 1:45pm** Understanding the Daily Life Impact of Gastrointestinal Symptoms for Autistic Children and Adults: The Power of a Community-Engaged Research Approach – *Amber Angell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA; Daniella (Dani) Florindez, MPH; Tavia L. Lawson; Melanie Guzman, BA*
- 1:45pm – 2:00pm** BREAK
- 2:00pm – 3:00pm** Student Presentations and Panel Discussion
- 3:00pm – 3:15pm** WRAP UP

REGISTRATION FEES

OT/OTA MEMBERS NONMEMBERS	OT/OTA NONMEMBERS	STUDENT MEMBERS	STUDENT
☐ \$89	☐ \$119	☐ \$49	☐ \$79

Cancellation/Refund.

\$35 is retained to cover cancellation/refund processing costs. Written notice must be received in the OTAC office by Thursday, July 9, 2026, to be eligible for refunds. No refunds after this date. OTAC reserves the right to make changes to the program. No refunds will be made based on these changes.

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AGENDA

9:00am – 9:15am

Welcome/Agenda Overview

9:15am – 10:30am

KEYNOTE: Partnering Up in Research Engagements

Sheryl J. Ryan, PhD, OTR/L

This session will use participatory action research (PAR) as a guiding example for integrating research and practice, exploring what occupational therapy can learn from collaborative research approaches that emphasize shared decision-making and meaningful participation. Clients, clinicians, and researchers bring unique areas of expertise that are all needed to produce relevant and actionable knowledge. Examples will draw from community-based partnerships and qualitative research experience. The session will conclude with implications for students, clinicians, educators, and researchers, emphasizing knowledge translation, implementation science, and the development of research-practice partnerships.

10:30am – 10:45am – BREAK

10:45am – 11:45am

Addressing Occupations in Family-Centered Care

Aaron Bonsall, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L

This presentation will demonstrate the importance of family occupations and how they can be addressed and include definitions of family, the importance of family occupations, and an analysis of how doing together is constructed. An understanding of the meaning of family occupations can enhance the focus of therapy in pediatric care and in other settings that are often overlooked. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of how practitioners can enhance family-centered care by focusing on occupations. Practical strategies for family-centered care include improved communication, examining service-delivery approaches, and taking a top-down approach to understanding families' needs.

11:45am – 12:45pm – LUNCH ON OWN

Understanding the Daily Life of Gastrointestinal Symptoms for Autistic Children and Adults: The Power of Community-Engaged Research Approach

Amber Angell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA; Daniella (Dani) Florindez, MPH; Tavia L. Lawson, Melanie Guzman, BA

In this session, findings from an ongoing research study in the Disparity Reduction and Equity in Autism Services (DREAMS) Lab focused on how autistic people and their families experience gastrointestinal symptoms, which commonly co-occur with autism, and their experiences seeking healthcare to address these symptoms will be presented. To be described will be the community-engaged research approach with Autistic Lived Experience Collaborators, a group of autistic adult collaborators, including innovative ways that are contributing to ongoing data analysis. During this presentation, the Autistic Lived Experience Collaborators will share their perspectives about and experiences with participating in this study. Participants will discuss implications for occupational therapy providers and the provision of person- and family-centered, neurodiversity-affirming care.

1:45pm – 2:00pm – BREAK

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Student Presentations and Panel Discussion

3:30pm – 3:45pm – WRAP UP

Symposium Coordinators

Deborah J. Bolding, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

Aaron Bonsall, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L

Allison P. Madrid, OTD, OTR/L

Samia H. Rafeedie, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR, CBIS, FAOTA

About Our Presenters



Amber Angell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, is an assistant professor in the Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy in the USC Ostrow School of Dentistry and holds a joint appointment in the

Department of Pediatrics of the USC Keck School of Medicine. She is the director of the Disparity Reduction and Equity in Autism Services (DREAMS) Lab, where she leads interdisciplinary teams to conduct multi-method, community-engaged research in collaboration with the Autistic Lived Experience Collaborators, a stakeholder group of autistic adults. Angell's work has been funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, the American Occupational Therapy Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health. Current funded projects investigate gastrointestinal symptoms among autistic children and adults, funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; and adverse mental health outcomes for autistic children and youth, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health.



Aaron Bonsall, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L, is a researcher focused on parents' experiences and on how occupational therapy practitioners can support caregivers through family-centered care. He earned a PhD in occupational science from the University

of Southern California in 2013 and a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy from Temple University in 2005. Bonsall currently teaches at the University of St. Augustine in San Marcos, CA.



Daniella (Dani) Florindez, MPH, is an artist and advocate for awareness, acceptance, and inclusion of autistic experiences in research settings. She completed a Master of Public Health at the University of Southern

California and consults on various projects as both a qualitative researcher and as an expert in participatory research; her mission is to include autistic voices at all stages of project formation. Florindez is a facilitator and teacher, presenting at the Society for the Study of Occupation: USA (SSO:USA), the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR), and in the Biden/Harris White House, discussing late diagnosis and Latina autistic adult experiences. Drawing from her own life, she is passionate about storytelling that centers masking via culture, intergenerational family structures, assimilation, stigma, and surviving. As a Peruvian-American, late-identified autistic woman, Florindez is grateful to the storytelling that helped her finally understand her brain. She writes more about the experience of 'masking' on her social media channels.



Sheryl J. Ryan, PhD, OTR/L, is an associate professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Her courses span population health and qualitative research, and she takes an active role in guiding student research. Her scholarly interests center on

qualitative research, community health promotion, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

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This Symposium will be recorded. Participate virtually on and then re-watch at your convenience for the life of the recording on OTAC's platform. Recordings are generally available 14 days following the conclusion of the event.

System Requirements. OTAC webinars are broadcast through Zoom. A broadband internet connection is required. For minimum system requirements, visit the following page:

- Zoom - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-Requirements-for-PC-Mac-and-Linux>

Earned PDU's

PDU's will be entered into your member profile record under c

Why OTAC Symposia?

To support OTAC Core Value No. 7 - Professional Development: To provide quality education and resources to advance the knowledge, skills, and continued competence of occupational therapy practitioners.

Symposium Disclaimer

This Symposium is sponsored by OTAC for the purpose of professional development. The material presented is not intended to represent the only or the best methods appropriate for the occupational therapy and/or medical condition or professional development issues being discussed but rather is intended to present the opinions of the presenters, which may be helpful to other health care professionals at arriving at their own conclusions and consequent application. Attendees participating in this professional development education program do so with the full knowledge that they waive any claim they may have against OTAC and its representatives for reliance on any information presented during this educational event.

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The California Foundation for Occupational Therapy (CFOT) was founded in 1981 as a nonprofit, public benefit organization to help support students, practitioners, and researchers advance their knowledge and skills, thereby enhancing occupational therapy services to the public.

Mission Statement

To advance the science and practice of occupational therapy to enhance health, well-being, and participation in life activities for all individuals, communities, and populations through supporting and promoting occupational therapy research, education, and public awareness.