

## Graduate Admission Essay

I did not always know that I wanted to be an Occupational Therapist. In fact, I didn't know such a career existed until junior year of my undergraduate career. If there was one thing I was certain of, it was the desire I had to care for others. Initially, this is why I decided to pursue a degree in psychology. I wanted to work in mental health. However, my interest in mental health was cultivated into something more due to my life experiences and exposure to other areas of study such as sociology and social work. I began to research fields beyond psychology. Much to my surprise, I discovered Occupational Therapy. I was instantly hooked. After careful consideration, between my research, shadowing, and educational pursuits related to the field, I was able to determine that this field is the right fit for me.

Occupational Therapy is a well-suited profession for me as aligns with my values and interests. My professional values include the acknowledgment of holistic health, the patient-centered model, and the mind-body connection. The notion of helping others engage daily in meaningful activities in order to facilitate independent living is encapsulated by the aforementioned values. I'll never forget when I learned that there are four types of social support: emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal. I wanted a career that was a confluence of all types of social support because it fosters the most improvement. Other careers that interested me did not offer this level of support. I am most interested in working in stroke rehabilitation, cancer rehabilitation, hand therapy, and brain injuries. However, my short-term goal is attaining a graduate degree in Occupational Therapy as this will make these goals possible.

In my experience and shadowing, one principle of occupational therapy that I learned is that people are agents capable to resume occupations or attain the best quality of life. In fall of 2015, my mother was diagnosed with a mutated BRCA-1 gene, a precursor to breast cancer and ovarian cancer. As a result, she underwent a double mastectomy as preventative measure. As her primary caregiver during her recovery, I was able to not only help her engage in her normal daily activities again like walking, using the bathroom, and even taking her medication, but I was able to witness her get stronger mentally and emotionally. This is an experience that I want to relive every day. This, too, was reinforced by my shadowing experiences, working with patients from all facets of life being treated a wide variety of areas such as development delays, attention deficit disorder, lymphedema, low muscle tone, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, stroke, etc.

It is not without challenge, that I was able to accomplish what I have thus far. However, I believe true passion coupled with steadfast effort will supersede any obstacles standing in one's way. It is through my journey of sacrifice that I discovered what I valued most. During my undergraduate career, I worked nearly thirty hours to support my education in a single-family home. In Spring of 2013, became very ill, I had mononucleosis, shingles, chronic fatigue, and had to receive a tonsillectomy. I lost a significant amount of weight, but through proper nutrition and exercise, I was able to finally maintain a healthy weight. Presently, I work full-time to support prerequisite coursework while shadowing. I did not let that hinder my progress. It is my spirit of never giving up that will also resonate in my professional career, especially encouraging patients to attain activities of daily living. This level resiliency and commitment will allow me to become a successful Occupational Therapist.

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