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# The New CEO Editorial Column has Arrived!

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Dr. Seuss said: “You’re off to Great Places!” and apparently he was right. This marks our first month of serving as co-chairpersons of the Society -- and we are learning and adapting to the role.

What direction shall we take to advance the Society? Our main tool is to analyze activity and build an occupational profile. So we began by mapping the members of the community - what is required to encourage all Israeli occupational therapists to join the Society?

Mapping out the needs –An online survey was developed and the responses indicated that the main issues of importance were: Providing courses and training to expand and update professional knowledge, building a supervised and standardized training overview that relates to the profession’s ethical code, and defining and developing a guide for advancing professional proficiency and expertise.

Delineating a “collaborative map” of partners and circles of support – including members of the Society’s committee, the higher professional committee, union representatives, service managers and heads of the academic occupational therapy departments. Collaborations such as these can enable the development of an action plan to promote our professional status.



**Aya Hasdai and Naama Katz**

We decided that this year we are setting out a vision for the profession of occupational therapy in Israel for the year 2025! From this we can derive the vision of the Society - leading the professional discourse of occupational therapy in the practical field.

The role of higher education is to impart knowledge of our profession. As a result of intensive research, occupational therapy practice changes rapidly to translate relevant research findings into actual practice in the field. The role of the Society is to enable the application of new knowledge through a lifelong learning process and to enhance the prestige and status of our members. The Society develops and assimilates the proper norms, values, and ethical codes, and delineates the boundaries of our occupation, of our professional responsibilities, and of the

loyalty we owe to our profession and our colleagues (from Prof. Orit Avidav-Unger, December 2011, Mofet Institute).

Our small community does a great deal to improve the quality of life of many people; motivated by our vision and love for our profession. Each and every member does so with complete faith in the values of our profession. We firmly believe in the importance of assembling together all of our professional values to create a shared vision that every therapist can relate to and that will encourage the establishment of professional standards. Such a vision will have a crucial impact on the professional quality of our work, but it requires us to join forces! It is up to us - together - to determine what it means to be part of a professional occupational therapy organization!

To change our profession's image, and how we are perceived – we must first work on ourselves: Let us strive to make the profession more accessible. We have already determined the “why” – the vision; and as to “how”, we must focus on increasing the public's understanding of what we know and what we do. To achieve this goal we must analyze the scope of our practice and form strategies of action. After all, we are occupational therapists – let's learn to do it for ourselves and then we can communicate it outward.

In the next issue we will detail our plans for action, which are based on needs assessment and meetings with the community. The program includes short-

term activities: formulating guidelines for the establishment of professional work groups (professional forums) under the auspices of the Society, conducting practical and in-depth supplemental training courses throughout the country for continuing education credits, and building and updating a database of marketing tools and skills to enhance the accessibility of our profession. Important long-term goals include increasing our exposure through the media and implementing broader plans such as organizing occupational therapy training, developing specialties, expanding the scope of our areas of practice, responding to the needs of the independent clinicians among us and forming connections with Knesset lobbyist groups.

We can do this by working together by organizing small professional interest groups. To actualize these plans of action we will need to mobilize and activate many dormant but important processes, some of which we are still not sufficiently aware of.

Each issue we will focus on a different area of our activities so that you, our readers, can experience what is going on behind the scenes together with us. In this way, you can consider how you can contribute and join in our efforts – you are invited at any time. We are not alone - working together will benefit all of us!

Finally, let us introduce **Batel Zmora**, the CEO of the Occupational Therapy Society. For the past two years she has been

managing the Society. She implements the Society's projects and agenda, oversees the budget, and works with the Society's service providers and paid employees. In addition, she serves as the contact person to other associated organizations that contribute and support our activities. Together with Israeli health and social organizations, such as the Ministry of Education, the nationwide Health Maintenance Organizations and the Ministry of Health, they identify the needs and then Batel initiates, organizes, and conducts vocational training and courses. Batel, in collaboration with a public relations firm, is initiating a new and comprehensive publicity program that includes, among other things, raising the general public's awareness of occupational therapy through various media.

She also serves as a sympathetic ear, and attends to the needs of our members to address issues raised by clinicians in the field with commitment and responsibility.

This month, thanks to Batel's initiatives, the Ministry of Education has authorized the accreditation of continuing education courses operated and sanctioned by the Society for teachers and education professionals. Thank you Batel for all you have achieved to date and we wish you continued success in all your future efforts.

Want to hear more? Feel free to contact us – we can meet and share more!

Yours,  
**Aya and Naama**