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## The Role of Occupational Therapy in the Adaptive Scuba Diving Industry

Erin Wallace

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, E.Wallace1@usa.edu*

Karen Park

*University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, kpark@usa.edu*

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# The Role of Occupational Therapy in the Adaptive Scuba Diving Industry

Erin Wallace, OTS & Karen Park, OTD, OTR/L, BCP

## BACKGROUND & PROBLEM

Adaptive scuba diving is an activity that provides many therapeutic benefits to individuals living with physical, visual, and/or cognitive disabilities. Occupational therapists (OTs) specialize in using valued activities as therapeutic interventions, however, the literature supporting the profession's value in the adaptive scuba diving industry is limited. There are no clearly defined job descriptions for OTs contributing to the adaptive scuba diving industry although evidence shows the therapeutic potential that OTs can bring to it.

## PURPOSE

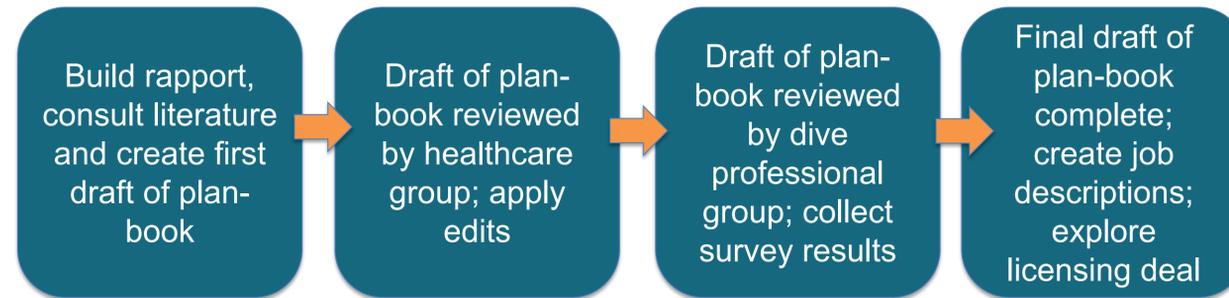
To demonstrate OT's value in the adaptive diving industry by creating an adaptive diving reference book for dive professionals to increase readiness for assisting divers living with cognitive, physical, and/or visual disabilities; and 2 job descriptions for OTs in adaptive diving settings.

### Outcome objectives:

- To create a detailed reference book for common conditions found in adaptive divers.
- To ensure accuracy and relevancy of the reference book through thorough review and feedback from dive and healthcare professionals.
- To create a job description for OT positions within the adaptive scuba diving industry.
- To explore a licensing deal for the reference book.

Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Kelly Twichel, OTR/L with Access Trax.

## METHODS



## RESULTS

IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF ADAPTIVE TECHNIQUES	RESULTS - DIVE GROUP	LIKELIHOOD OF USING REFERENCE BOOK	RESULTS - DIVE GROUP
Strongly agree	9	Very likely	14
Agree	9	Somewhat likely	6
Disagree	3	Not likely	1
Strongly disagree	1	No	1

INTEREST IN MORE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	RESULTS - DIVE GROUP	LIKELIHOOD OF RECOMMENDING TO COLLEAGUES	RESULTS - DIVE GROUP
Very interested	15	Very likely	13
Somewhat interested	6	Somewhat likely	8
Not interested	1	Not likely	0
		No	1

## DISCUSSION

- The student's objectives, the job descriptions, as well as data from the survey results are supported by Wells et al. (2019) & Blumhorst et al., (2020).
- The role of occupational therapy in the adaptive scuba diving industry is an emerging practice area in need of advocacy.
- The student's project advocates for this through the development of 2 clear job descriptions for OTs in the adaptive scuba diving industry as well as through product development of the reference book.

## CONCLUSION

**“This book is well needed in the field and has the potential to be an informative quick reference for those in the field.” – Dive participant 21**

- Adaptive scuba diving provides many therapeutic benefits for participants.
- The literature & evidence to support OT's role in adaptive diving is limited.
- Through consultation with literature and the student's qualitative data, this project lays a foundation for the role of an adaptive scuba diving occupational therapist.



References



OT job descriptions