

Introducing Ruth Spain

Ruth is currently employed as a hospital and community occupational therapist providing assessment and intervention for the population of a rural Waikato area. The clients of the service include individuals from five years of age and up with physical or cognitive disabilities. Ruth prepares applications for complex equipment, wheelchairs and seating, and housing modifications.

After graduating from AUT University in 1999, Ruth worked first as an inpatient therapist in the Auckland region before moving into community services where she developed her skills in housing modifications in the Bay of Plenty. Following a two year break from therapy overseas she worked in specialised wheelchairs and seating before moving into her current role in 2008.

Ruth is passionate about new graduate occupational therapists' need to be well prepared for practice and supervises students, particularly in their final year. She has mentored new graduate therapists and provided supervision for individuals within a team. She believes that when experienced therapists share their enthusiasms, students and new graduates will quickly gain in confidence.

Involvement in NZAOT:

During her training Ruth joined NZAOT to link into the organisation she felt would assist a new graduate's integration into the occupational therapy world. She developed a passion for membership of the organisation and encouraged classmates to join. Since graduation Ruth has maintained her membership except for when overseas. She now feels it is time to give back to NZAOT some of her passion for the profession.

Future aspirations:

Throughout her years of training and working as an occupational therapist Ruth has believed in the need for exploration of non-traditional therapy areas. She has delighted in some recent developments and would love to see and encourage more over the next few years. Ruth expects the realm of occupational therapy professional skills to continue to broaden in New Zealand, but suggests occupational therapists need to have greater awareness of the possible areas in which occupational therapy skills could be applied.