Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Sharing your story

RCOT is the professional body for occupational therapists in the UK. We champion the profession, raise awareness of the difference occupational therapy can make and influence change so that more people can access occupational therapy when and where they need it.

Personal stories are one of the most powerful ways to achieve this. They help people understand the impact of occupational therapy and why access to the right support matters. Thank you for considering sharing your experience with us. Your story could help raise awareness, improve understanding and influence decision makers. It may be used in RCOT communications and campaigning work, including media activity where appropriate. Participation is entirely voluntary, and we will support you throughout the process.

What would happen?

Step 1: An initial conversation

A member of our team will arrange a phone or video call with you to learn more about your experience.

This is an informal conversation where you can share your story in your own words. We can make adjustments to support you, such as sending questions in advance, taking breaks, communicating by email, or involving a supporter or advocate. Where possible, we prefer video calls because they allow us to create a transcript and capture your experience accurately. You can keep your camera off if you wish.

The recording and transcript will only be used by RCOT to help us develop your story and will not be shared externally. Once your story has been written up and agreed with you, the recording will be securely deleted.

We may ask questions to better understand:

- your experience and what happened
- how it affected you and those around you
- the difference occupational therapy made, or could have made
- why this matters to you

There is no need to prepare anything in advance. We understand that sharing personal experiences can sometimes feel emotional, so only share what feels comfortable for you. You can pause, take a break or stop the conversation at any time.

Step 2: Writing up your story

Following the conversation, we will write up your experience. This could be used in RCOT communications activities such as:

- campaign materials
- website content
- reports and briefings
- social media
- member communications
- media activity

Before anything is shared:

- we will send the draft to you
- you can check it for accuracy

- you can suggest changes or corrections
- nothing will be used without your agreement

Could I be asked to speak to the media?

Possibly, but only if you are comfortable doing so.

We hope to build a network of people who may be willing to share their experiences with journalists when relevant opportunities arise. However, agreeing to share your story with RCOT does ***not*** mean you have to speak to the media.

If you are open to talking to the media, when an opportunity comes up, we will contact you and explain:

- what the opportunity is
- which media outlet is involved
- what the interview would involve
- how your story may be used

Media interviews are usually short conversations with a journalist about your experience.

What support will I receive?

If you choose to speak to the media, we will support you throughout the process.

This may include:

- explaining what to expect
- helping you prepare for the interview
- talking through any concerns or questions
- liaising with the journalist where appropriate
- being available before and after the interview

Our aim is to make sure you feel informed, supported and able to take part in a way that works for you.

Do I have to take part?

No. Taking part is entirely your choice, and you remain in control throughout the process.

You can:

- decide not to share your story
- agree to share your story with RCOT but not the media
- decide whether to take part in media opportunities on a case-by-case basis
- change your mind at any stage before material is published or an interview takes place

There is no obligation to participate beyond what you feel comfortable with.

How will my information be used?

We will always discuss with you how your story may be used and what information you are comfortable sharing. Depending on the situation, it may be possible to use only your first name or limit identifying information. We will explain the options available and seek your agreement before using your story.

Questions?

If you have any questions or would like to discuss anything before deciding whether to take part, let the person know who has shared this information with you or please contact our media team direct at hello@rcot.co.uk or 0203 141 4600.

Thank you for considering sharing your story. Your experience could help others access occupational therapy so they can get the support they need to do things they love, want and need to do.