

## Physical Therapy Service-Learning: Reflecting on Values

*Psychosocial Aspects of Physical Therapy Seminar is a class that allows physical therapy students to consider the lives of their future patients and how they can best serve them going forward, beyond the clinical side of care. Service-Learning fits well into this course as a way to work on communication skills and professional self-development that can be very useful in future clinical experiences. Many students are placed at sites around Boston that serve elder community members. One physical therapy student, Kali Shumock, was placed at Ruggles Assisted Living Center this semester, where she and another student led an exercise program for their residents and encouraged physical activity. In her reflection below, Kali explains how Service-Learning helped her to reexamine her own personal values as well as apply concepts from class to create an improved experience for the residents she served with.*

One of the first classes in Psychosocial Aspects we discussed personal core values. This is something I was familiar with, as I have a set of core values I like to live by. However, I haven't reevaluated them in months prior to that class. It was an excellent opportunity to reevaluate and think about the core values that are important to me within this profession. We discussed the importance of going beyond the "natural" behaviors to develop awareness and higher-level practices to promote excellence and professionalism in the workplace. Service-learning gave me a chance to implement these values in real life situations related to PT. I think reminding myself of these values helped me throughout the semester. For example, we also learned about Prochaska and DiClemente's Stages of Change Model. I believe many residents at Ruggles were in the contemplation or preparation stage. In lecture we discussed techniques to help individuals progress through the stages depending where they are currently. In order to increase attendance and get residents to the action and maintenance stages, we utilized techniques such as promoting our exercise program, encouraging the small initial steps and verifying residents that they have the skills.

We decided to go in early one week in order to attend breakfast and talk to many of the residents that we wouldn't normally see. This was a chance to get to know everyone, discuss our exercise program and the potential benefits. Our attendance rate almost doubled the following week. Service-learning gave me the opportunity to implement this knowledge for a deeper understanding of how to motivate individuals. The course content enhanced my ability to engage in higher level practices by always keeping my core values in mind, which ultimately led to overall improvements at our site. Without the knowledge and techniques from our course content, I don't think we would have increased our attendance rate as effectively or as fast. There were several readings that I was able to draw from, such as the APTA core values pdf, in order to understand not only my core values, but our profession's. I was also able to draw from many readings regarding motivation, religion and spirituality and other situational circumstances that patients are dealing with. This is applicable as it is essential that we understand each patient as a whole. My service-learning has been a great way to start implementing this.