



# A Structured Model to Promote Clinical Competency in Staff

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## Mentorship

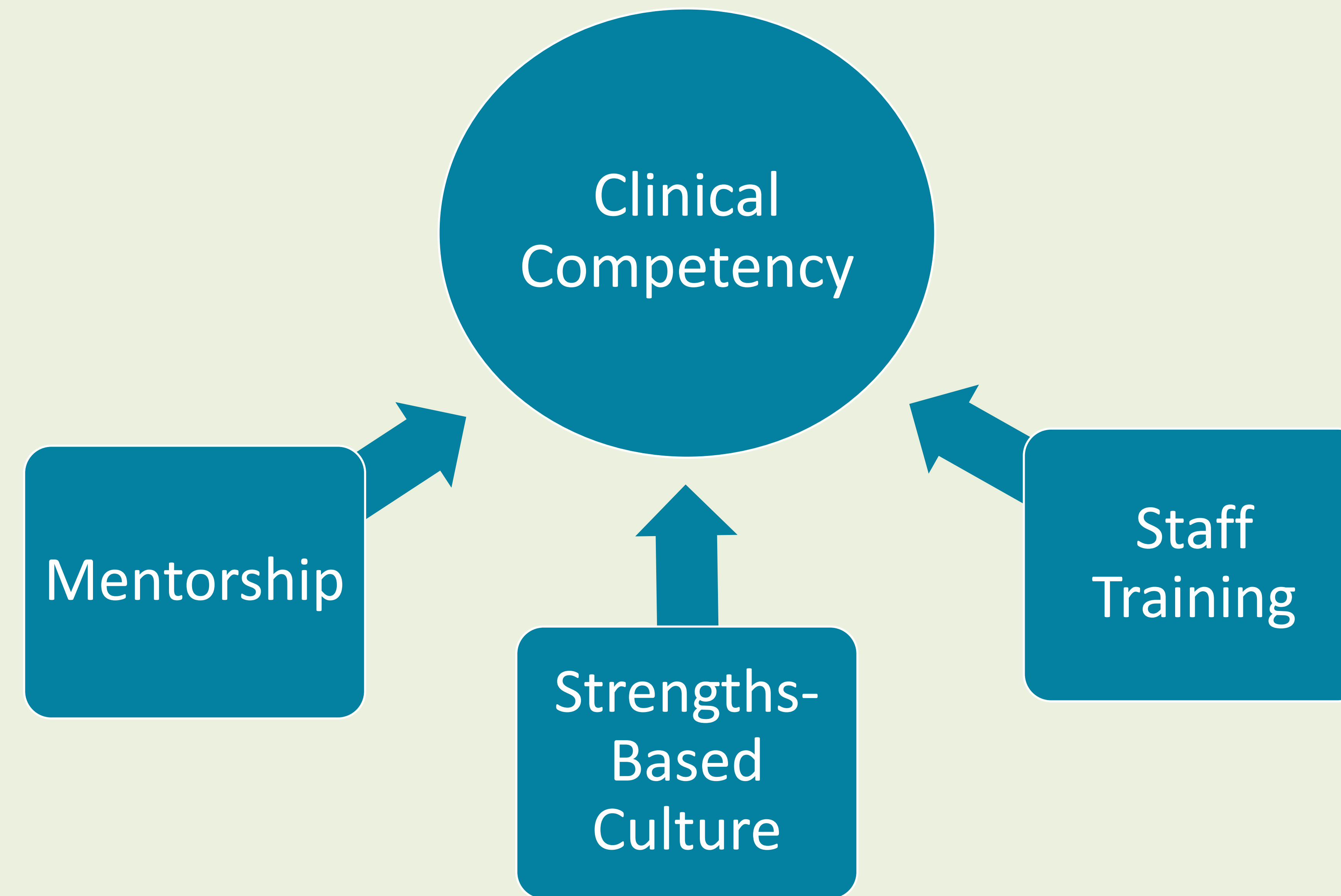
Occupational therapy is a field which develops proficiency through practice, so it is essential to provide professionals with individualized, hands-on mentorship to develop their skills. Methods used for skill development include:

- Assign mentors to all staff members
- Provide hands-on training to expand on therapeutic technique
- Discuss and troubleshoot complex cases
- Facilitate active clinical reasoning during treatment sessions

Mentoring can also assist with the development of soft skills, such as:

- Responsibility
- Ownership in learning
- Problem solving
- Initiative
- Interpersonal skills
- Supervisory skills
- Art of mentorship

Mentors monitor mentees to ensure their needs are met and help them assimilate into the strengths-based culture.



## Staff Training

Staff training opportunities help therapists implement best practice and evidence-based interventions, especially in a specialized field. In addition to continuing education reimbursement, methods for staff training include:

- Clinical Discussions: Setting aside one hour 2 times per month for staff training based on identified needs to expand clinical competence.
- Student Program: Involving new practitioners in student training activities to develop foundational knowledge.
- Therapist Lending Library: Providing textbooks, specialty intervention books, and treatment resources.
- In-services: Conducting additional staff training on more in-depth topics on weekends and evenings.
- Hosting continuing education courses on-site
- Caregiver education: Encouraging new staff to attend caregiver education events.
- Specialty groups: Forming groups of staff members with a common interest to develop their skills in a specialty area through reciprocal mentorship (i.e. ocular motor).
- Conducting interdisciplinary learning with other allied health professionals

## Strengths-Based Culture

Developing a strengths-based culture can create higher employee engagement, lower attrition, and greater job satisfaction. According to a Gallup poll, employees who have jobs that use their strengths are more likely to say they enjoy their work, are 8 percent more productive, and 15 percent less likely to leave their jobs ("Benefits of Public Health Mentoring for Professionals," n.d.). This culture can be established by:

- Building areas of strength in addition to developing a sense of overall competency
- Providing continual learning/development opportunities in interest areas
- Assigning clinic responsibilities in areas of strength
- Allowing employees to grow and progress in their job roles
- Identifying employees as experts and resources for others in areas of skill
- Generating awareness and enthusiasm for the strengths of others
- Matching needs of clients to experience of therapists
- Providing mentoring with a focus on skill building rather than skill deficiency

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*State of the global workplace*. (2017). New York, NY: Gallup Press.



A mentor facilitates clinical reasoning with her mentee during a treatment session.

- Participate in equipment lab
- Meet with mentor weekly
- Receive hands on mentoring in treatment
- Observe other staff members
- Gradually increase caseload
- Attend student lectures
- Attend clinical discussions
- Attend parent overviews
- Host student observers
- Complete standard evaluations
- Take on small clinic responsibilities

- Co-lead clinical discussions
- Co-lead parent overviews
- Represent clinic in community
- Complete focused evaluations
- Give student lectures
- Identify and pursue areas of interest
- Supervise Level I students
- Co-supervise Level II students

- Supervise Level II students
- Complete intake calls
- Lead clinical discussions
- Lead parent overviews
- Mentor staff and participate in annual reviews
- Advocate for needs of clinic
- Complete comprehensive evaluations

- Grow next generation of mentors
- Educate area health professionals
- Community representation
- Lead specialty groups

New Staff

Experienced Staff

Senior Staff

Expert Practitioners

Clinical Competency