

## From the Editor

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# Being inspired

I write this *From the Editor* while participating in the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Inspire 2023 Conference and Expo in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. This is a yearly conference where thousands of occupational therapy practitioners, students and others gather for professional growth and to celebrate the profession of occupational therapy. I thank Axana Scherbeijn from IOS Press for being an exhibitor at the conference and for the visibility it gave to *WORK*. In particular, we were able to promote the call for papers for a special issue on *Work Related Pain* which is a special collaboration between *WORK* and the *Journal of Back and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation* (BMR). Remko Soer, the editor of BMR and I will be the guest editors of this special issue. As you know, work related pain can occur either as a direct result of work or pain that affects work performance. If this is an area of scholarship for you, we welcome the submission of papers on topics such as job stress and the prevalence of low back pain, environmental factor impacting work related pain, the impact of conditions such as arthritis on work performance and workplace accommodations. The deadline for manuscript submissions is September 1, 2023. For more information and detailed submission guidelines, visit <https://workjournal.org/preparation-manuscripts>.

The AOTA conference always includes inspirational speakers. I'd like to share two of these individuals with you: John O'Leary and Mikey Rowe. When John O'Leary was nine, a fire exploded and left him with burns on 100% of his body. He shared, "Being out of bed doesn't mean you're awake. We spend a lot of our lives going through the motions. We want to live our best lives, but we're so busy that we usually settle for good enough. We hope tomorrow will be different, but we aren't clear how to live differently. We make excuses for ourselves. And it leaves us feeling unclear, unguided and unful-

filled" (<https://johnolearyinspires.com/>). During his keynote, he asked us to reflect on the following questions:

"Why Me?

Who Cares?

What More Can I Do?"

As well as to think about "one person who inspires me to become the best version of myself.."

I encourage you to consider listening to John's *Live Inspired* podcasts at <https://johnolearyinspires.com/podcast/>. A special note is that John is married to an occupational therapist!

Mickey Rowe (<https://mickeyrowe.com/>) who is autistic, legally blind, an actor, director, consultant, disability rights activist, author, and public speaker gave the keynote at one of my favorite conference events, *Breakfast with a Scholar* sponsored by the American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF). As Mickey shared, "People want so desperately to fit in that they forget what makes them stand out. Be loud. Take up space. Our differences are our strengths." I encourage you to read/listen to his book, *Fearlessly Different*.

This issue of *WORK* contains 31 papers, including five related to COVID-19 and the Return to Work Corner: *Providing quality employment services to people living with asthma in the vocational rehabilitation program: A model for meeting the needs of an emerging clientele*. The Editor's Choice is *Understanding work inclusion: Analysis of the perspectives of people with intellectual disabilities on employment in the Icelandic labor market* by authors Álfheiður Hafsteinsdóttir and Stefan C. Hardonk. As the authors write, "People with intellectual disabilities experience persistent marginalization in relation to work and employment. The concept of work inclusion provides a way of generating a more specific understanding of the meaning of employment participation. Work inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities focuses not on mere presence, but instead emphasizes

relational aspects and potential for meaningful participation”. Using a qualitative research design, the authors reported that their “. . . findings show the role of the work environment in participants’ experiences of opportunities for having good relations at work, having a sense of belonging to the organization, being able to make a contribution to the goals of the organization, and receiving trust in one’s professional role and responsibility”; and that “when participants experienced opportunities in relation to these basic components of work inclusion, they felt more positively about their employment participation”.

Our most recent *Learn at WORK* webinar titled, *Emerging vocational rehabilitation strategies for people with diabetes mellitus* which is part of the Return to Work Corner series is available through our website at [workjournal.org](http://workjournal.org). Please join us on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 from 1 pm-2 pm EST for the next

*Learn at WORK* webinar on *A perspective on occupational therapy and assistive technology: Research, contributions, challenges, and global initiatives* presented by Dr. Hassan Izzeddin Sarsak, PhD, OT, Batterjee Medical College, Saudi Arabia.

As always, I welcome hearing from you. As John O’Leary shares, “live inspired together”.

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