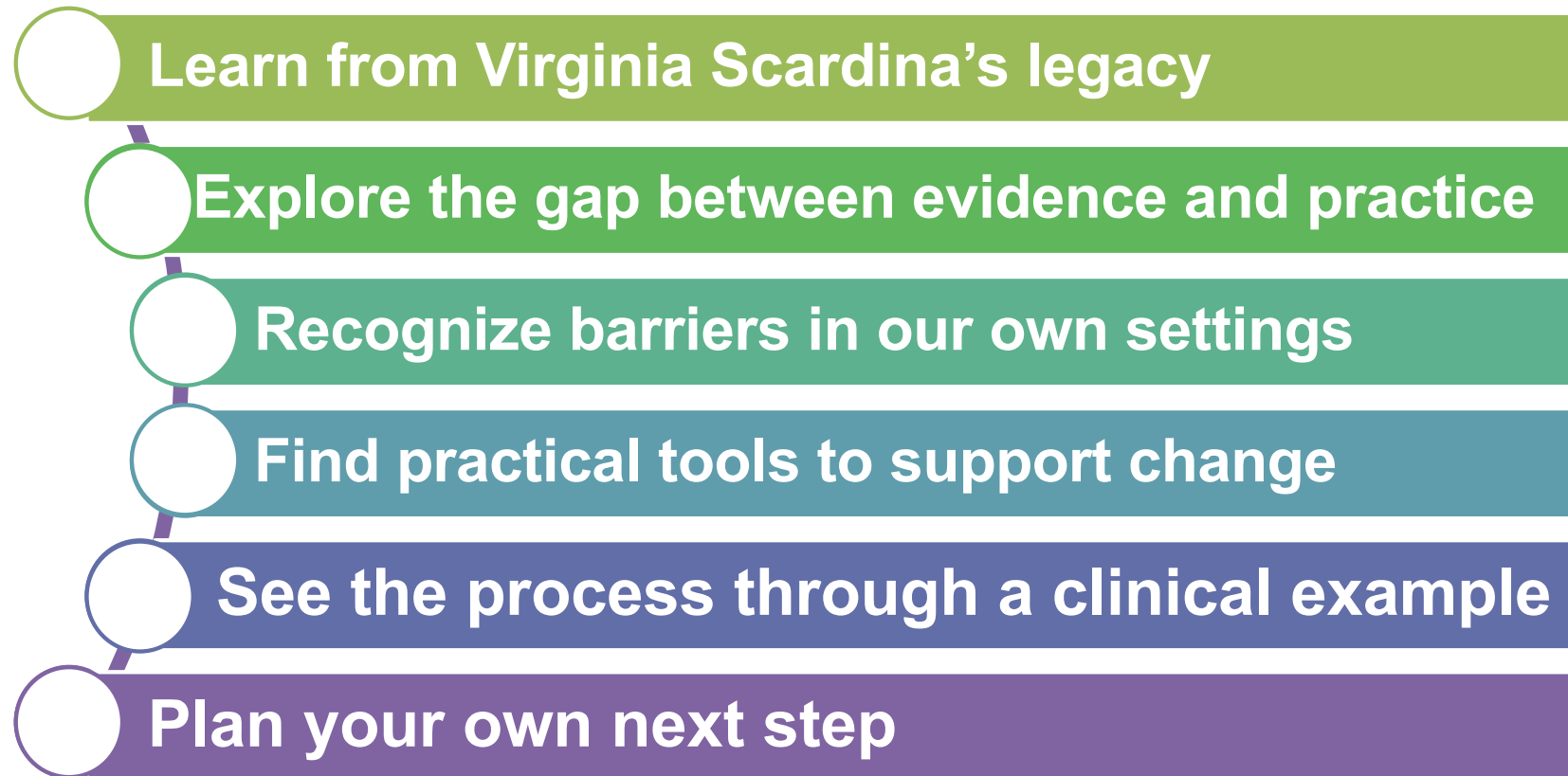


How Clinicians Can Move Knowledge Into Practice and Lead Meaningful Change

Jessalyn Dickerson, MSOT, OTR/L, BCP
2026 OOTA Virginia Scardina Lectureship
October 17, 2026



Our Roadmap for Today

- 
- Learn from Virginia Scardina's legacy
 - Explore the gap between evidence and practice
 - Recognize barriers in our own settings
 - Find practical tools to support change
 - See the process through a clinical example
 - Plan your own next step

Learning from Virginia Scardina

MA, MEd, OTR/L, FAOTA



RECOMMENDED READING

A Model Mentor

Scheerer, C. R., Drumheller, C. L., & Mehbod Owens, S. L. (2004). A model mentor: Virginia Scardina, MA, MEd, OTR/L, FAOTA. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, 18(3), 65–80.

https://doi.org/10.1080/J003v18n03_05

Read the full article to appreciate the depth of her contributions.



Bringing Theory Into Practice



1971

Cincinnati public schools

Established a program focused on sensory integration.



1972

Learning opportunities

Developed an internship for OT students and practicing therapists to connect theory with clinical practice.

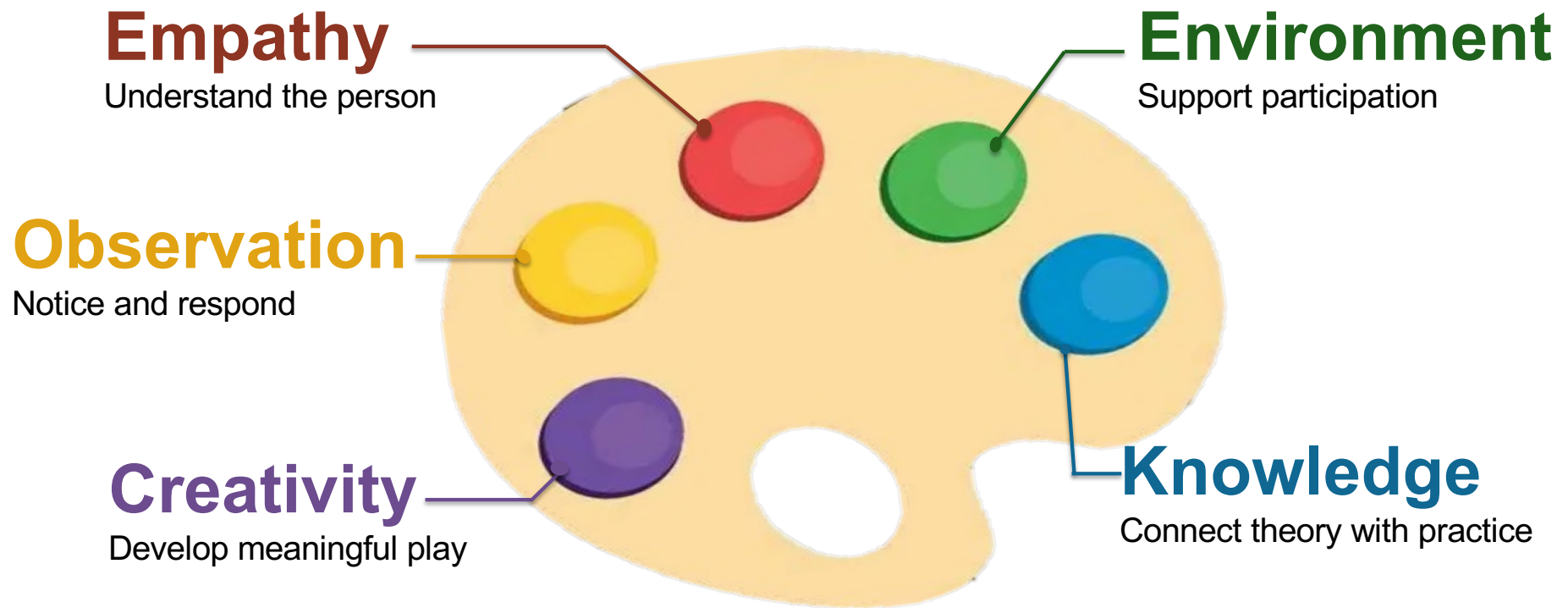


Her influence grew through the therapists she mentored and the people they went on to teach.

(Scheerer et al., 2004, pp. 68–69)



The Art of Therapy



(Scardina, 1981, as cited in Scheerer et al., 2004, p. 69)

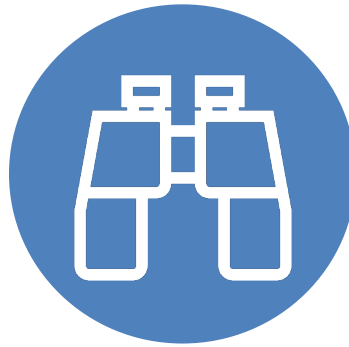
Bringing Out the Best in Others

Recognize strengths and create opportunities to grow.



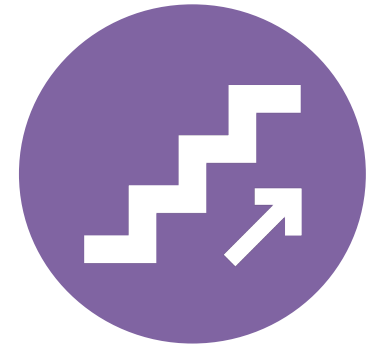
SUPPORT

Encourage learning and offer constructive feedback.



VISION

Help others see strengths and possibilities not yet seen in themselves.



CHALLENGE

Set high expectations and provide opportunities for growth.

How can we bring this approach to learning and change in our own teams?

(Daloiz, 1999, as cited in Scheerer et al., 2004)

Making Knowledge Understandable and Usable

“You’ve got to teach to learn.” (Scheerer et al., 2004, p. 70)

Make it clear

Make complex ideas understandable.

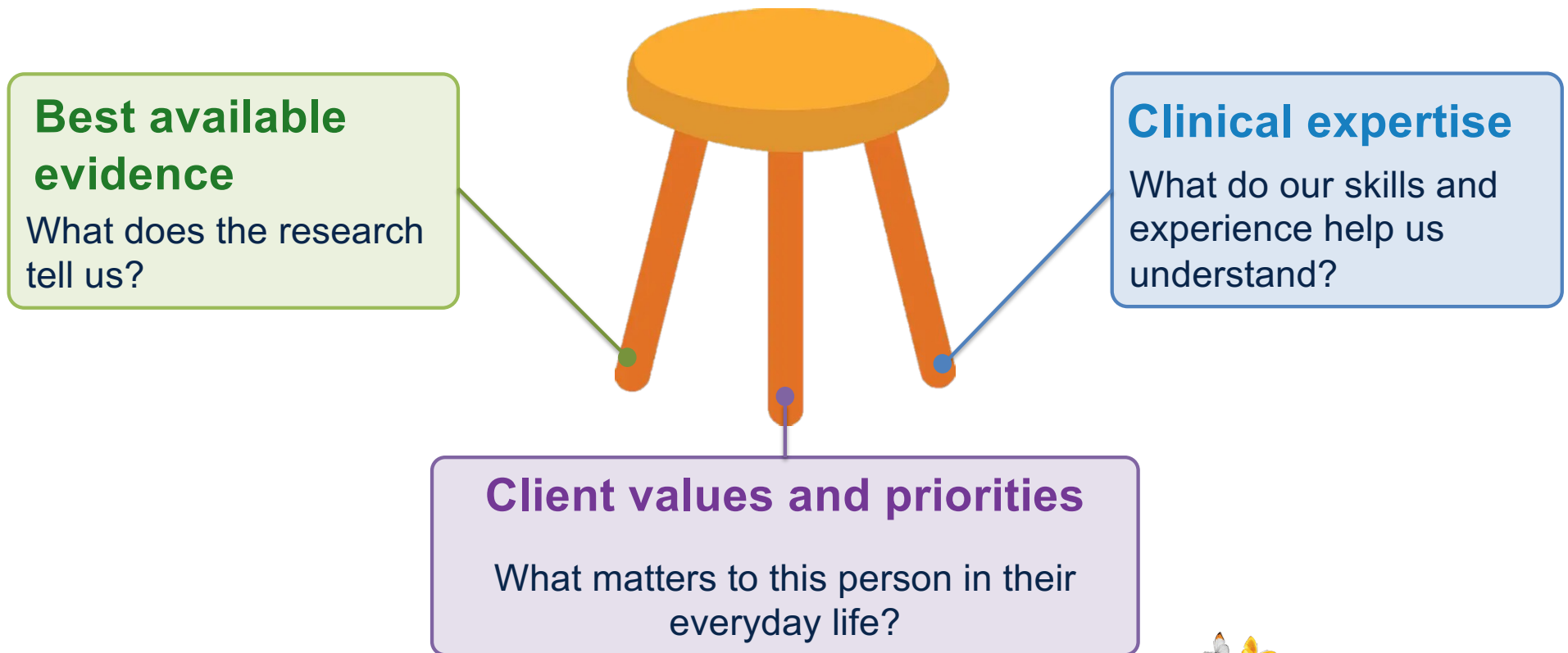
Make it useful

Explain knowledge in ways colleagues, clients, and families can use.

Help others teach

Create opportunities for others to teach and share what they learn.

Evidence-Based Practice



Strong clinical decisions bring all three together.

The Evidence-to-Practice Gap

What we know

Research can inform better clinical decisions.



What happens in practice

Using that knowledge consistently takes support, time, and attention to the setting.



Knowing about evidence does not automatically lead to using it.

(Morris et al., 2011; Olswang & Prelock, 2015)

Knowledge Translation and Implementation

Helping people use knowledge in everyday practice



Researchers

Generate evidence
and study practice.



Clinicians

Apply evidence with clients
in real settings.



**Leaders and
organizations**

Provide resources and support
sustainable change.

Frameworks help organize the process.

(Grimshaw et al., 2012)



Implementation Science Made Simple

The “thing”

The intervention, practice, or innovation.



Effectiveness

Does the thing work?



Implementation

How do we help people and places do the thing?



Strategies

The supports we use to help people do the thing.



Outcomes

How much and how well do people use the thing?

Adapted from Curran (2020)

Objective 1

Identify barriers to translating evidence into practice and develop actionable plans.

Barriers to Evidence-Based Practice



Individual Level

- ✓ Understanding the relevance of evidence
- 🔍 Skills for finding and interpreting research
- 🛡️ Confidence applying recommendations



Resources and Systems

- 🕒 Time and competing demands
- 🏠 Access to articles, equipment, and funding
- 👥 Leadership and administrative support

Look at both the person's needs and the conditions around them.

(Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2022; Juckett et al., 2022)

Addressing Barriers

"Healthcare systems differ in structures and resources. Identifying barriers is essential to fostering an EBP culture."

(Melnik & Fineout-Overholt, 2022)



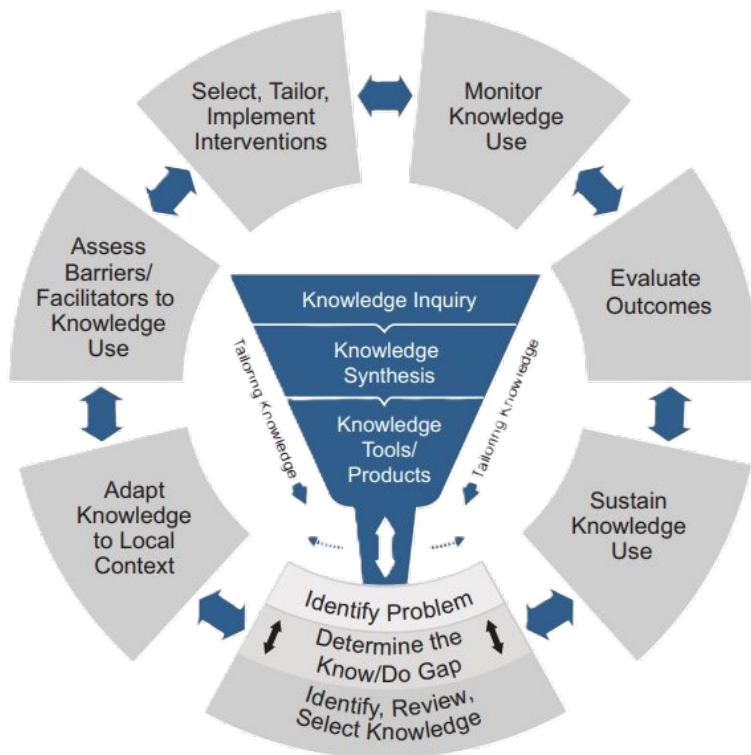
Reflection Question:

What are the most significant personal barriers you have encountered when implementing evidence-based practice recommendations in your practice?

Objective 2

**Gain skills to appraise evidence
and pilot EBP changes.**

The Knowledge-to-Action Framework



Knowledge creation

Research, synthesis, and tools that make knowledge usable.

Action cycle

A process for adapting, using, reviewing, and sustaining knowledge.

(Graham et al., 2006, as reproduced in Presseau et al., 2022)

Knowledge Creation

Knowledge inquiry

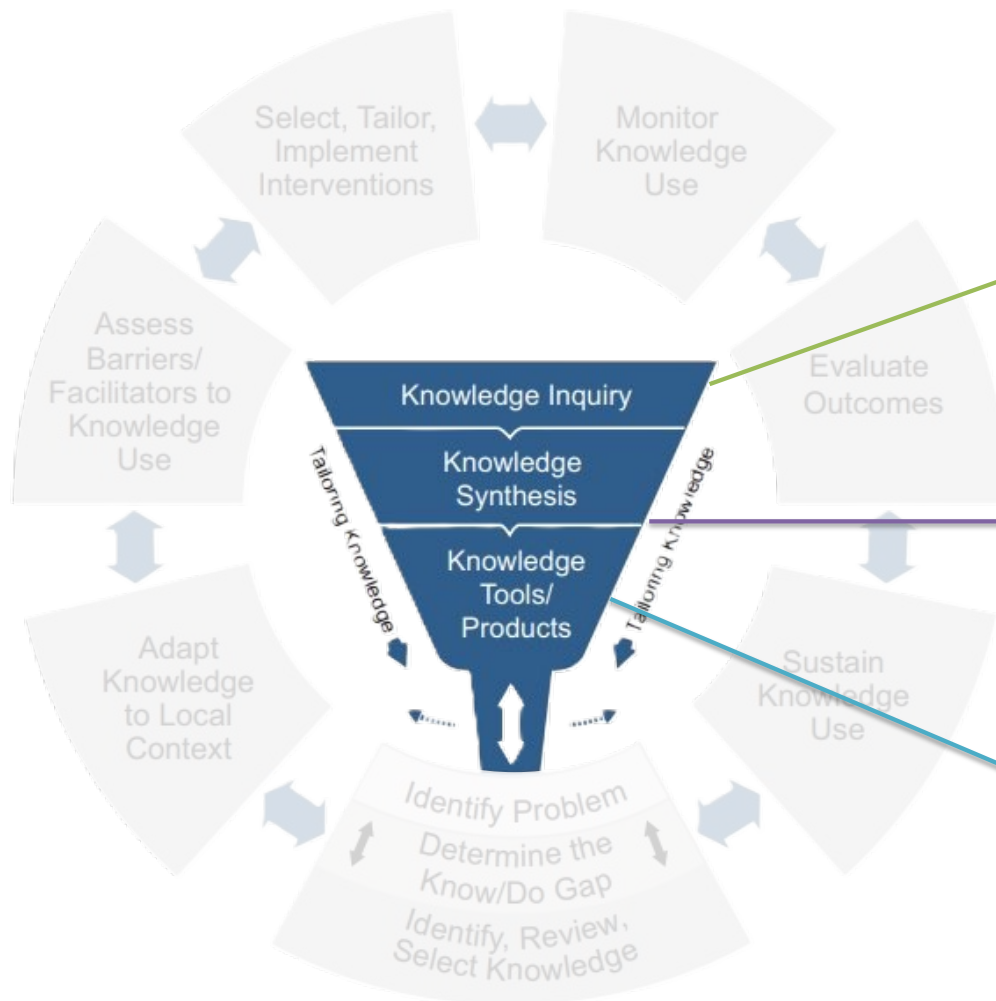
Individual studies build understanding.

Knowledge synthesis

Reviews bring findings together.

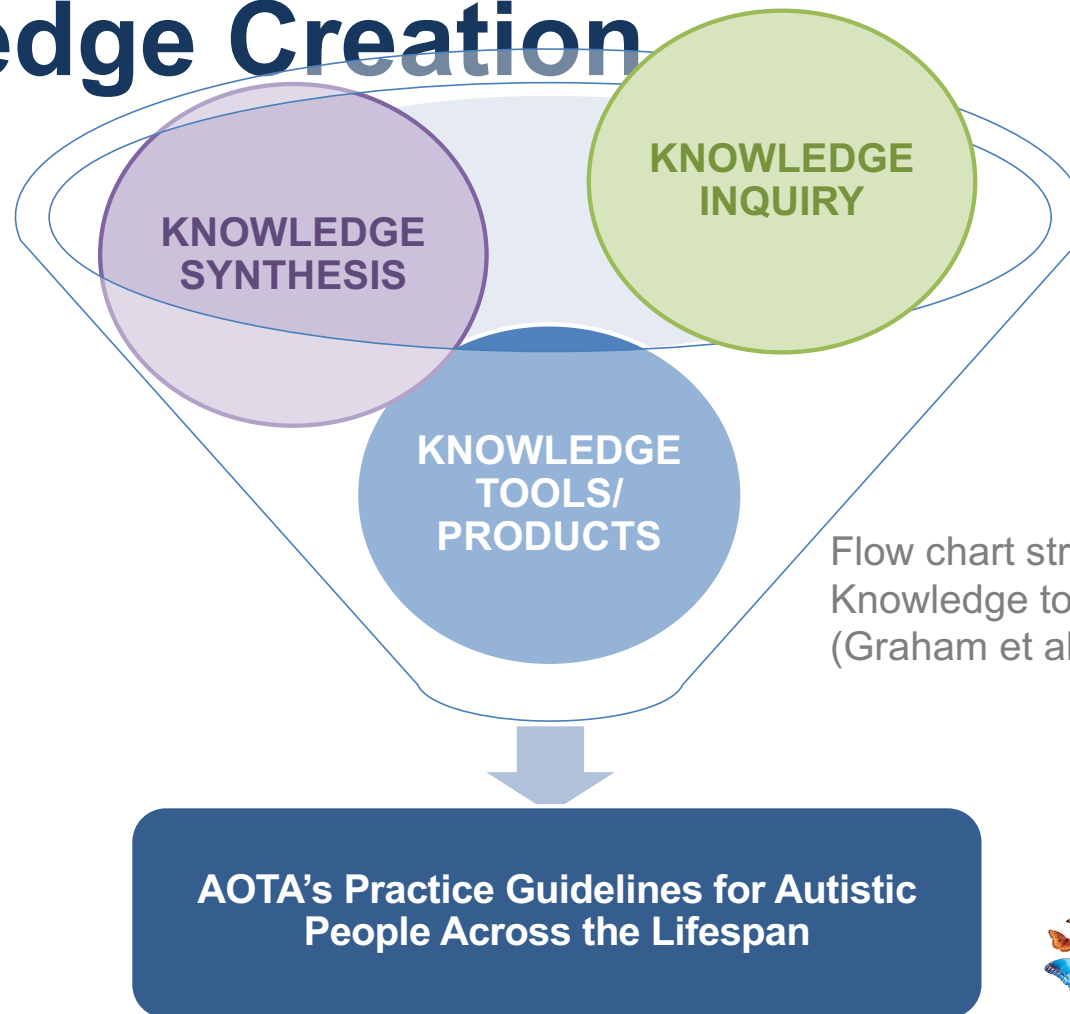
Knowledge tools and products

Guidelines and other resources support decisions.



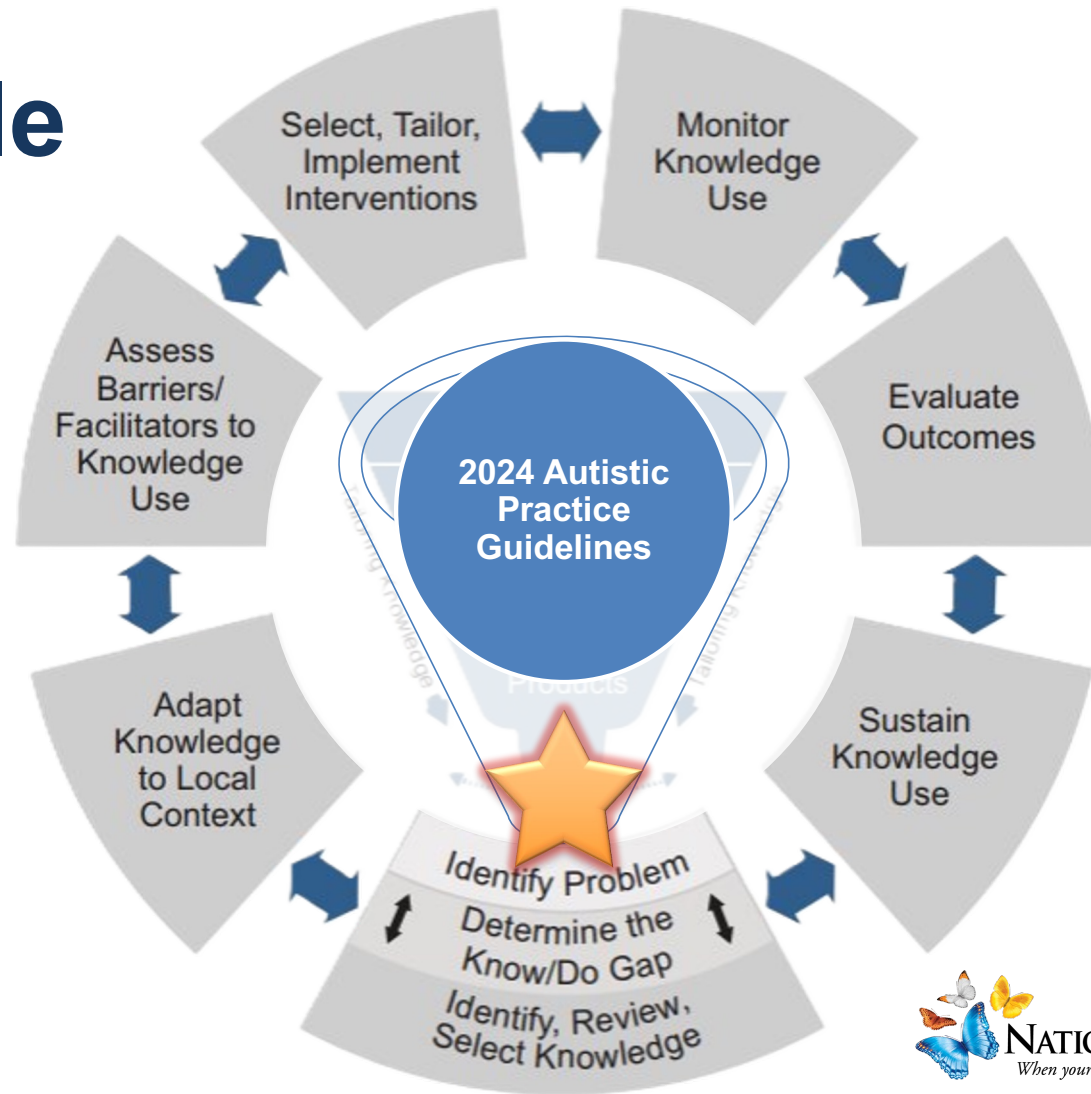
(Graham et al., 2006, as reproduced in Presseau et al., 2022)

Knowledge Creation



Flow chart structure adapted from the Knowledge to Action Framework (KTA) (Graham et al., 2006)

Action Cycle



Tools for Putting Evidence Into Practice



**What is in
your toolkit?**

Choose resources that address
the task and the barrier.

Finding Relevant Evidence

Practice guidelines	Recommendations informed by evidence syntheses.
Systematic reviews	Findings brought together around a focused question.
PubMed	Studies addressing questions that remain.
Librarians and colleagues	Help with searching and access.

Understanding What the Evidence Means

Before applying a finding, ask:



People and practice

Who and what does it apply to?



Trustworthiness

How trustworthy are the findings?



Outcomes

Which outcomes did the researchers examine?



Fit with your setting

How does it fit our clients and setting?

Adapted from Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (n.d.)

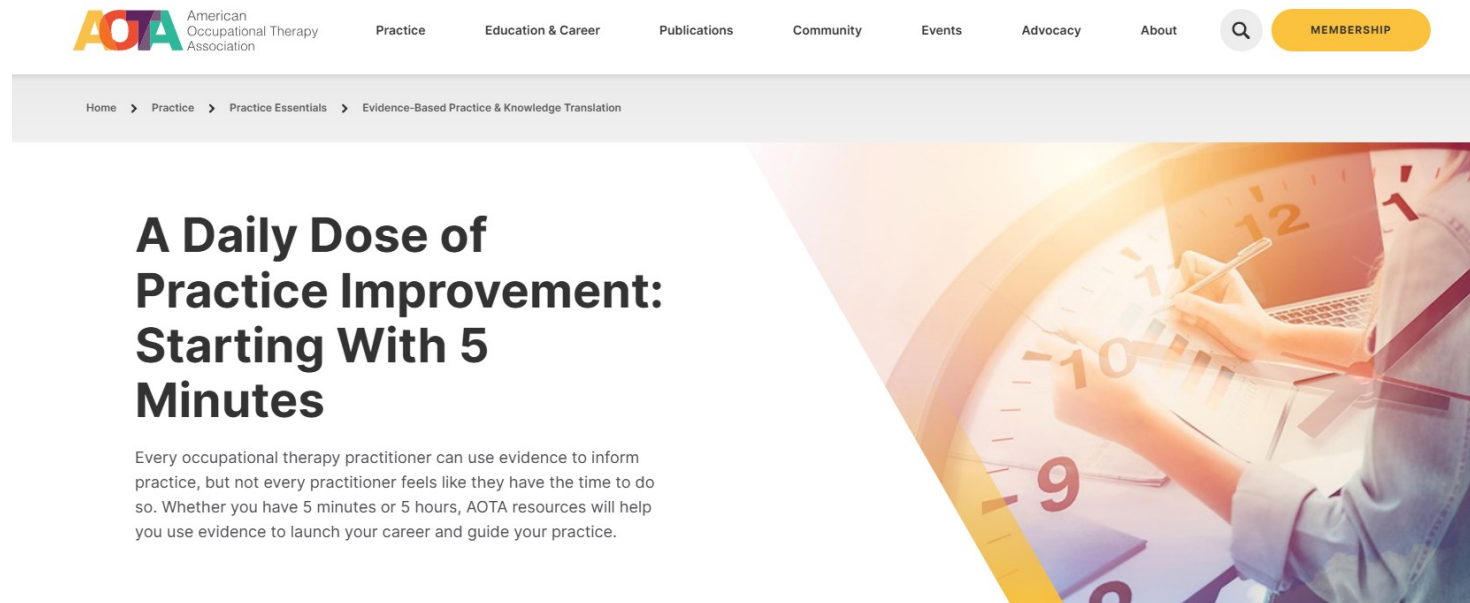
AOTA Knowledge Translation Toolkit

-  **Time management**
Practical strategies for managing time.
-  **Research access**
Strategies for accessing research articles.
-  **EBP champion**
Strategies for developing your role.
-  **Funding**
Resources for securing funding.
-  **Documentation**
Strategies to support documentation.
-  **Community of practice**
Tips for creating a local learning community.
-  **EBP protocols**
Steps for planning implementation.
-  **Journal club**
Guidance for starting and maintaining a club.

[Explore AOTA's Knowledge Translation Toolkit](#)

AOTA, 2023

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources



The screenshot shows the AOTA website header with the logo and navigation links: Practice, Education & Career, Publications, Community, Events, Advocacy, About, and a yellow MEMBERSHIP button. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Practice > Practice Essentials > Evidence-Based Practice & Knowledge Translation. The main content area features the title "A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement: Starting With 5 Minutes" and a paragraph stating that every occupational therapy practitioner can use evidence to inform practice, but not every practitioner feels like they have the time to do so. Whether you have 5 minutes or 5 hours, AOTA resources will help you use evidence to launch your career and guide your practice. To the right of the text is a large image of a hand writing on a notepad, with a clock face in the background.

AOTA American Occupational Therapy Association

Practice Education & Career Publications Community Events Advocacy About **MEMBERSHIP**

Home > Practice > Practice Essentials > Evidence-Based Practice & Knowledge Translation

A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement: Starting With 5 Minutes

Every occupational therapy practitioner can use evidence to inform practice, but not every practitioner feels like they have the time to do so. Whether you have 5 minutes or 5 hours, AOTA resources will help you use evidence to launch your career and guide your practice.

[A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement | AOTA](#)

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources

If You Have 5 Minutes



If You Have 15 Minutes



If You Have 30 Minutes



If You Have 60 Minutes



If You Have More Time



[A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement | AOTA](#)

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources

If You Have 5 Minutes



- Review [HOT Evidence Infographics](#)
 - Snapshots of evidence-based interventions from Critically Appraised Topics or Systematic Review Briefs
- Watch a video about [how to access research articles through PubMed](#)
- Review our [Member Spotlights-Quality](#)

[A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement | AOTA](#)

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources

If You Have 15 Minutes



- Review Evidence Informed-Intervention Ideas
 - Checklists to help practitioners guide their intervention sessions based on evidence
- Read OT Practice Research and Evidence Perks Updates

[A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement | AOTA](#)

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources



If You Have 30 Minutes



- Read [Critically Appraised Topics and Systematic Review Briefs](#)
 - Summarized key findings from systematic reviews for use in practice
- Read [AJOT Evidence Connection articles](#)
 - Case stories that translate and apply evidence-based interventions to daily practice
- Read [Systematic Review articles](#) in *AJOT*

[A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement | AOTA](#)

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources

If You Have 60 Minutes



- Listen to [Everyday Evidence Podcasts](#)
 - Interviews with experts in occupational therapy that emphasize how to translate evidence to practice
- Read [AOTA Practice Guidelines](#)
 - Include clinical recommendations based on systematic review findings, case studies, and algorithms for decision making

[A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement | AOTA](#)

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources

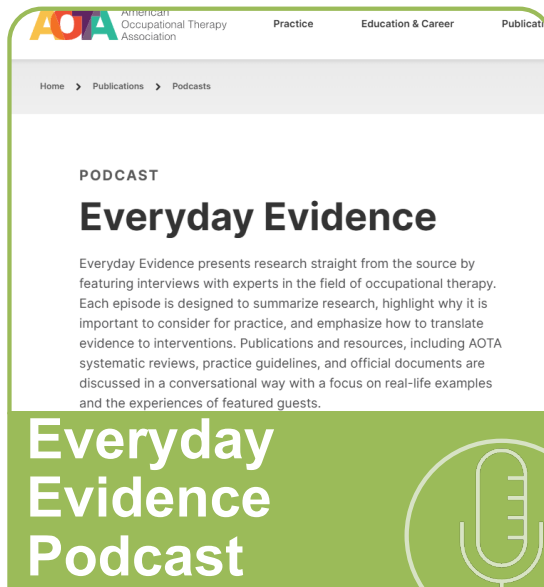
If You Have More Time



- Become an Evidence-Based Practice Champion
- Create a culture that values evidence-based practice
- Start a Journal Club
- Develop a plan to gather and review evidence in your practice setting
- Secure funding for a research project
- Prepare your organization to implement an evidence-based intervention protocol

[A Daily Dose of Practice Improvement | AOTA](#)

Carrying Out the Action Cycle: AOTA Resources



[Everyday Evidence Podcast | AOTA](#)



[Practice Smart | AOTA](#)



[AOTA's ECHO® Series on Multiple Sclerosis \(MS\) | AOTA](#)

EBP in a Pediatric Hospital-Based Setting

A real-world example

Supporting clinicians as they connect evidence with everyday practice



Image: Microsoft PowerPoint stock images

Knowledge Translation Program

Knowledge brokers



**EBP
Coordinators**



**Research
Scientists**

Knowledge mechanisms

- New hire learning
- Journal club
- Clinical outcome group
- Evidence application
- Independent EBP project
- Practice guideline implementation group
- Quality improvement team

Applying Practice Guidelines Across a Clinical Team

Our focus

AOTA's practice guidelines for autistic people across the lifespan.

Our practice question

How can we help clinicians understand and apply relevant recommendations consistently?

Our approach

A Practice Guideline Implementation Group within our Knowledge Translation Program.

(Patten et al., 2024)

Making the Guideline Usable

- 01 Divide the guideline into sections.
- 02 Review and summarize key recommendations.
- 03 Gather related clinical resources.
- 04 Consider how recommendations fit our setting.

What does a clinician need to understand or do differently?

Supporting Clinicians in Applying Recommendations

Supports for practice

Documentation updates

Shared summaries and resources

Facilitated mentorship

Reflection on clinical cases

Questions for discussion

What would this recommendation mean for this client?

What would help you apply it?

Making knowledge understandable while supporting learning



Reviewing Use and Planning for Sustainability

Access and understanding

Can clinicians find and understand the resources?

Clinical decisions

How are recommendations informing practice?

Remaining barriers

What still makes application difficult?

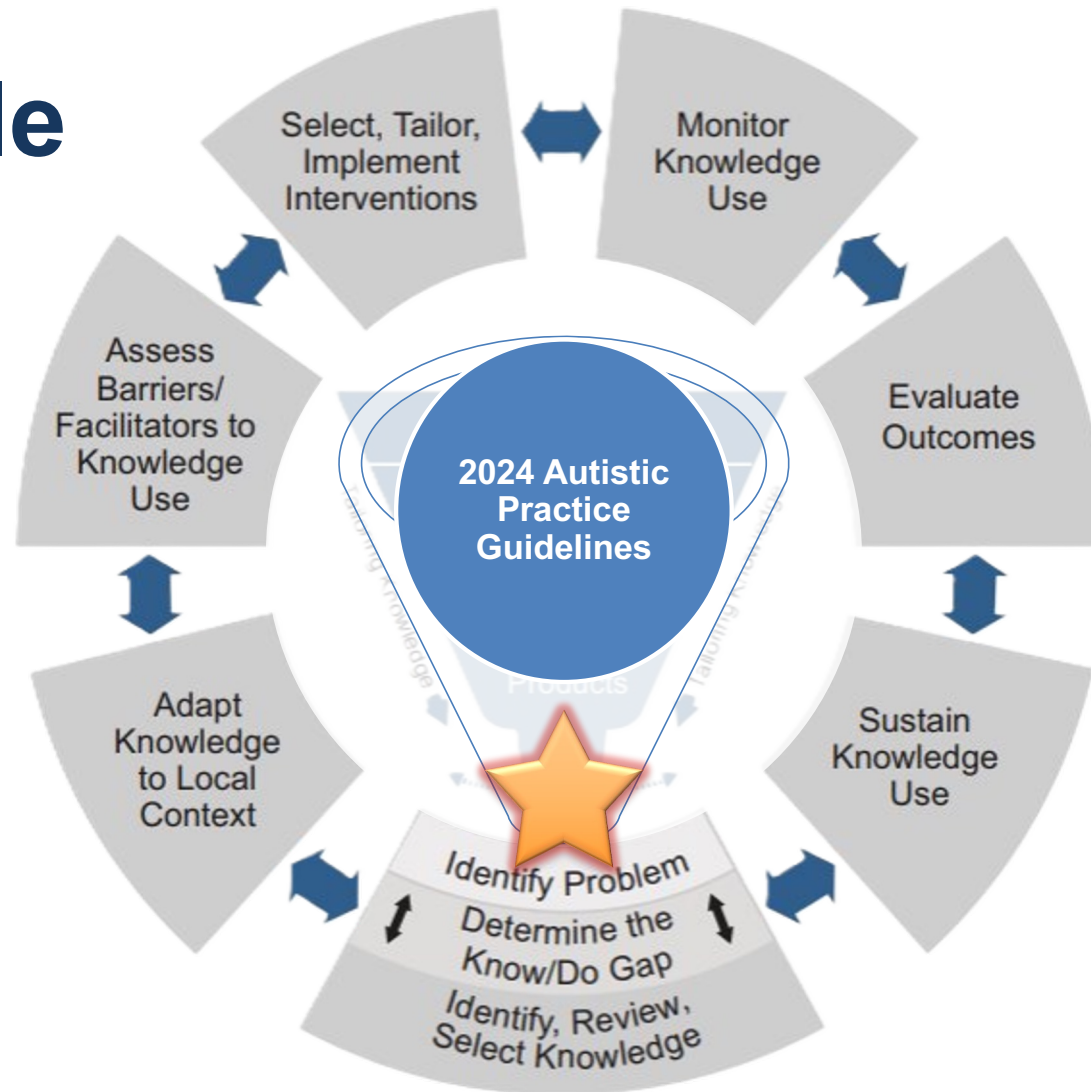
Keeping it going

How will resources and learning opportunities stay current?

Orientation, ongoing mentorship, and team case review



Action Cycle



Thank you!



When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

**EVALUATION: How
Clinicians Can Move
Knowledge Into
Practice and Lead
Meaningful Change**



***Scan QR code to submit
your evaluation***

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