**Learner Perspectives:**

**Excerpts of Interviews with OT and PT Learners**

**on Placement in Rural Communities**

**The Intersection of Personal and Professional Lives**

“One thing I’m starting to realize in this town is everything goes around word of mouth. We had a boil water advisory a couple of weeks ago and we knew about that quick. And just through word of mouth in the hospital, before we had the notice we knew about it.” (PT Learner)

“With regards to rounds, very succinct, very very client centred, everybody knows everybody in the community so when they are talking about discharge planning, people know the street that they’re living on, and the house and what the house looks like and what the barriers are. So that was really cool to see.” (PT Learner)

“We also had a family meeting that I attended. So that was again with the nurse and it was for an intake for a long term care patient at the hospital so there was the nurse, the pharmacist over the phone, PT was there, and the dietician was there as well. But the one thing that was different in this meeting was that it was a lot more client centred or a lot more personal almost, but then people knew each other from difference avenues. The patient taught one of the nurses, he was a teacher in the school so in Grade 6 or something like that she was one of his pupils. So everything just seemed a lot more personal and people were a lot more invested almost in the patient so that was really nice to see.”

“Last weekend we went, I think we mentioned, we went to go watch a hockey tournament. Um and one of the staff members was in it and we went to go watch them and it was funny because we knew the ref. The ref was one of our patients and I knew [a] guy because he was one of my patients and it was just very small town, rural and that’s kind of what I expected but not to that extent. It’s funny because we are outsiders still in this town, we’ve only been here 5 weeks but when we went to the rink it just seemed like we’ve been there forever because we seem to know so many people and bump into so many people. So that was really great. And then on the Monday cause they had a fundraiser, after the tournament and it was just a dinner and dance sort of thing, we bumped into a few people there and we bumped into so many people, but didn’t quite remember who. But on the Monday I bumped into someone at the hospital and, “Hey, I’m so and so’s cousin.” And it is a very small town.” (PT Learner)

“Um, oh, I mentioned because we didn’t have shovels to shovel us out of the driveway and I was just talking to one of my patients and they happened to know where we were and when we got home the driveway was shovelled and there were two shovels left for us which was really nice.” (PT Learner)

“Actually, today, we have a client, very very very chatty, never stops talking. Super cute but she never stops talking and she babysat one of the other staff members when he was a little boy but she’s very, like she tells us stuff about him. And it’s nice to hear his cute childhood stories but she tells us things like he probably would not necessarily want us to hear. Like his Dad had cancer for a long time, so she talks a lot about that, or issues that they had in the family. Ah, marital disputes and things like that. I don’t really want to hear that but it’s kind of awkward because I know that he knows I know. So obviously it’s not the best situation, so often I’ve just kind of changed the subject or redirected it but she’s very persistent. So…that’s been interesting.” (OT Learner)

“It’s not more sort of the profession to the client, it’s more sort of the other way. So a lot of times clients will just rattle off someone else’s medical history in plain view. So and so has this, this and that when you bump into her. So it’s not really within the staff but within the community for sure because everybody’s just so inclusive. So that’s kinda the little things we run into. And trying to, if someone asks you about, “Oh, you’re seeing so and so’s Mom, how’s she doing?” just trying to keep that within really succinct and not saying much at all because of those issues.”

“Yeah, so a while ago I was having a conversation with one of the PT/OT assistants because I heard on the radio, they do it in Thunder Bay too, you can put your message out on the radio and then someone listens, hears it and can contact you. So I know they do that and I’ve heard them do that but in [placement town] I guess it’s fairly common to do it for say, a hospital or a physician to do it. Just put an announcement on the radio for a client who they can’t get a hold of. I know, it’s weird, so we were talking about confidentiality. I mean, obviously they don’t tell them their test results over the radio but they’ll say, “Can Alex Smith please call the [community] hospital and ask for a doctor, whatever.” And it’s a very common practice I guess, because they have a lot of people who are living in First Nations communities and they can’t get a hold of them cause they don’t have a phone or their phone is disconnected. So we were kind of having a discussion and some of, I mean, it’s a breach of confidentiality really because then everyone listening to the radio knows that, they may not know that they’re a patient at the hospital but they have some type of affiliation with the hospital. But I guess it’s common practice, I was very surprised about that. I never heard of people doing it for that reason.” (OT Learner)

“Oo, and I thought of something outside of placement too, so then after the curling tournament there was a social. They call it a ‘social’. Kind of a party or a dance at the curling club for the participants. We were there, we were having fun just dancing and I knew one of the OT employees from the hospital was at that tournament and it was late at night. Not too too late, maybe around like 11:30 or midnight-ish and we’re just dancing and having fun and then I feel a tap on my shoulder and it’s her and she, I don’t know if I should say this but she’s like, “How drunk are you?” And, I’m, “A moderate amount.” Like I don’t know what to say. Moderately? And she’s like, “okay, can you come help me with something?” And I said, “okay, what is it?” And she said, “Well, a guy just broke his leg.” So I automatically switched into PT mode I guess and just ran down to check it out. They didn’t splint him or anything, they didn’t even know it was broken. Like, it looked okay, so I just did a quick assessment, we got him a wheelchair because he couldn’t wait there. Yeah, it was fine….Yeah, that’s an aspect of rural placements where, you’re probably going to see people out in the community that you work with at the hospital.”