

# CAP Submission TOOLKIT

## Step 1. Getting required materials.

Download [CAP Worksheet](#) and [CAP Guidelines for Evidence Exchange](#)

Critically Appraised Papers (CAPs) are at-a-glance summaries of the findings and methods of selected individual articles from focused-question, evidence-based reviews. Readers turn to CAPs for a detailed critical appraisal of an individual research study. The CAP worksheet contains these important aspects of critical appraisal. The CAP guidelines provide a step-by-step description of each part of the critical appraisal process.

## Step 2. Review the PowerPoint: [Evidence Exchange CAP Developer Training](#)

This is designed to complement the CAP Guidelines and provides supplemental information and helpful tips for completing a CAP. For those who would find it valuable, please see the additional PowerPoint [Research Statistics 101](#) for evidence-based practice.

## Step 3. Writing a focused question.

Focused questions provide the CAP reader with information on the relevance of an article to a clinical population and to occupational therapy practice. A focused question may be developed before or after an article is selected. Focused questions often use a PICO format. *PICO* is an acronym that represents different components of the focused question.

- **P** is for **p**articipants/**p**opulation/**p**roblem, which determines who or what the question is about.
- **I** is for **i**ntervention. This part of PICO describes the details of the intervention or therapy being examined, and it specifies the boundaries of the treatment.
- **C** is for specific **c**omparison groups, but depending upon the research design for the review, they may or may not be a consideration.
- **O** is the **o**utcomes of interest. Research studies often contain numerous outcome measures to ensure that all the potential effects of an intervention are considered. Care needs to be taken to consider outcomes that are clinically relevant and appropriate. Outcomes can range from those addressing occupational performance and participation to those related to body structure and function.

Examples of PICO questions are:

- For patients with dementia and their caregivers (*P*), does occupational therapy (*I*), when compared with no treatment (*C*), improve daily functioning in patients and sense of competence in caregivers (*O*)?
- For children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder and their families (*P*), does occupational therapy (*I*), when compared with no treatment (*C*), improve performance in school, home, and community occupations (*O*)?

Some focused questions do not include either the comparison group or specific outcome measures. An example of this type of question is,

- What occupational therapy interventions in the areas of paid and unpaid employment and education (*I*) are effective in the rehabilitation of adults with serious mental illness (*P*)?

### **Step 3.** Choosing an article for review.

Choose an appropriate article based on Evidence Exchange criteria.

The following criteria must be considered prior to selecting an article for appraisal and development of a CAP to be submitted to the Evidence Exchange:

- The article or study describes an intervention within the scope of occupational therapy practice.
- The article was published in a peer-reviewed journal.
- The article demonstrates Level I, II, or III evidence (see description in CAP guidelines for Levels of Evidence)
- The article was published within the past 10 years of date of submission
- Study was published prior to 10 years from date of submission but is considered “classic” or “seminal” (e.g., influential impact on the field, frequently cited).
- The CAP does not duplicate an article currently included in the Evidence Exchange

### **Step 4.** Reading the article for the first time.

Reading the article carefully is the most important part of the critical appraisal process. Read the article once for an overview of the background, methods, results, and conclusions. This first read provides a snapshot of the article, along with ideas for critical appraisal.

### **Step 5.** The second review and critical appraisal of the article.

The critical appraisal process begins more formally during the second review of the article. At this step, it is important to read the article together with the CAP worksheet and CAP guidelines. This will make it easier to extract and summarize information from the article. Having read the article previously makes it quicker and simpler to go through the CAP worksheet systematically, following the style format of the American Psychological Association (APA).

### **Step 6.** Develop and write clinical bottom line section for CAP worksheet.

After the critical appraisal process is complete, the last step is considering the implications of the results of the article for clinical practice, education, research, and program development. The section “Clinical Bottom Line” asks the question, “What are the possibilities for this evidence?”

As discussed in the CAP guidelines, implications need to be reported in consideration of the strength of the evidence (e.g., type of study design, level of evidence, identified study limitations, biases). Include implications identified by the author and any additional implication that you judge to be appropriate (applicable) for practice, education, or research. Whenever feasible, provide clear and concrete recommendations as to how the evidence may be

implemented. Please keep in mind that you are reviewing only one article; therefore, implications should reflect this single study.

## **Developing Partnerships for CAP Submissions**

Although some participants submit CAPs independently, others do so as part of a group. Some form student–faculty partnerships, and others have faculty–clinician partnerships. Any partnerships benefit from clear guidelines and transparency of the process. Because the CAP submission will be published on the Evidence Exchange Web site, expectations may be higher than those for a typical student project. It is up to the faculty advisor to determine if the CAP submission process is to be included in student grading, or is to be considered separately. Some highlights of both types of partnerships include:

### *Student–faculty partnership*

- Students are aware of the criteria established and required for participation in the Evidence Exchange, such as meetings, required reading, required writing, and editing.
- Students and faculty come to consensus about the process and format for developing the CAP, such as steps to be followed and the role of faculty member in final decision-making process.
- One of the challenges of student–faculty partnerships is getting the CAP to meet the requirements for submission of the Evidence Exchange. Although students have a great deal of experience with the critical appraisal process, they may have limited clinical expertise and often struggle with the “Clinical Bottom Line” section. In many cases, faculty members must decide when further revisions by students are no longer productive to meet quality standards for the Evidence Exchange. The number of drafts may be decided upon before the partnership begins, or it may be determined as the process moves forward.
- Timeline considerations: If CAPs are being completed as course-related projects, please consider developing and submitting a CAP based on the submission timeline. For example, if a submission date occurs on May 1, the assignment could be designed for a course offered in the spring. This would allow ample time for the student to go through the process, the faculty member to offer feedback on form and content, and the student to complete edits prior to submitting the work to the Evidence Exchange. [2013 Timeline](#)

### *Faculty–clinician partnership*

- The process and requirements for participation are explained to the clinician, such as meetings, reading, writing, and editing.
- The clinician and faculty come to consensus about the process and format for developing the CAP.