

## Carissa Vergara, B.Sc. Psych, BSc/MSc OT, OT Reg. (Ont.) Occupational Therapist

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Carissa graduated Cum Laude from D'Youville College in Buffalo, New York in May 2004 with a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. In the program, Carissa completed six clinical placements in the United States and in Canada, which provided her with enriching clinical experiences. She had the opportunity to work in the community, hospital, and school-based settings and encountered a variety of disabilities where she gained valuable knowledge thereby establishing and enhancing her occupational therapy and clinical skills. Carissa is also a graduate from the University of Toronto where she obtained her Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Exceptionality in Human Learning in 2001. Carissa has worked at the Credit Valley Hospital as an Occupational Therapist in the acute inpatient psychiatry unit and in the private sector with Herrold and Vernon Evalworks. Currently, Carissa is employed as an Occupational Therapist for school health support services with Community Rehab as well as an independent evaluator for AssesMed.

### AREAS OF EXPERIENCE

#### Psychiatric Experience:

Carissa was employed at the Credit Valley Hospital on the acute inpatient psychiatric unit and completed her psychiatric fieldwork placement at the Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo, NY on the adult and geriatric psychiatric unit where she gained experience in assessing and treating clients with a variety of psychiatric conditions (i.e. psychotic disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders, substance-related disorders and mood disorders) on an individual basis and group setting. Carissa was responsible for leading task activity and process groups that focused on self-care, leisure and productivity. She was also part of a multi-disciplinary team in which she gained knowledge of working with a variety of disciplines. In addition, she completed a fieldwork placement for the Homewood Healthcare Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) for Dufferin-Wellington County as well as completing an advanced clinical at the Erie County Medical Center on the chemical dependency unit where she was responsible for creating and implementing a stress management program specifically geared to this population.

#### Pediatric Experience:

Carissa is currently employed with Community Rehab as an Occupational Therapist in the school support services. Carissa is continually gaining experience in working with children with a variety of disabilities (i.e. autism, pervasive developmental delay, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome). Carissa is responsible to assess, treat and consult with the child individually as well as collaborating with the teaching staff and family regarding fine motor, gross motor and sensory issues. In addition, Carissa completed her project thesis in this area of practice, which was nominated for Occupational Therapy Project of the Year in 2004.

In addition, she is also employed as an Occupational Therapist at the Credit Valley Hospital in Child & Family Services where she part of a multidisciplinary team that assesses and provides treatment with children with developmental disorders such as Autism.

### Physical Medicine:

Carissa gained experience in this area during her fieldwork placement at the New York University (NYU) Medical Center's Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine in New York City, NY in the inpatient rehab unit. Carissa treated the adult and geriatric population with various disabilities including hip/knee replacements, CVA's, cardiac conditions, amputations, neuropathies and multiple sclerosis. She was responsible for individually assessing, treating and involved in discharge planning for clients in regards to necessary equipment needed, safety issues and family training. Also, Carissa gained exposure in splint making, power mobility training, and barrier free design concepts as well as leading and co-leading the conditioning (upper body strengthening) and life skills group.

Carissa has gained further experience with soft tissue injuries at Herrold and Vernon Evalworks. She was responsible for evaluating and assessing an individual's functional performance for their activities of daily living after suffering injuries due to a motor vehicle accident. In addition, she educated clients in regards to proper and safe use of assistive devices and accommodations in order to maximize their independence at home and help promote a healthy recovery towards their pre-accident level.

Carissa continues to develop her physical assessment skills with AssessMed by performing and completing independent and objective functional evaluations with client's post-MVA. The assessment focuses on the client's activities of daily living pre and post accident level as well as providing recommendations that would maximize the client's independence and improve their quality of life.

### EMPLOYMENT

- The Credit Valley Hospital, May 2008 - Present
- AssessMed, March 2008 - Present
- Community Rehab, September 2004 – Present
- Herrold and Vernon Evalworks, February 2005- August 2007
- The Credit Valley Hospital, June 2004 – January 2005

### EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Science/Master of Science in Occupational Therapy, D'Youville College, Buffalo, New York, 2001-2004.
- Bachelor of Science in Psychology & Exceptionality in Human Learning, The University of Toronto, 1997-2001.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AFFILIATION

- Member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (COTO)
- Member of the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists (OSOT)

- Fieldwork Preceptor to Occupational Therapy Graduate Students from University of Toronto and D'Youville College
- Presented at a Youth Volunteer Career Presentation at the Credit Valley Hospital regarding the profession of Occupational Therapy
- Presented at the University of Toronto's Career Center's Annual Program "Career Panel" regarding the profession of Occupational Therapy
- University Of Toronto Alumni Mentorship Program. Provides guidance and acts as a resource to undergraduate students who are interested in Occupational Therapy.

*Updated January 2009*