



Travel Occupational Therapy

The Good, the bad, the ethics

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Introduction

- ◆ Occupational Therapist for 5 years
- ◆ Travel Occupational Therapist for 4 years
- ◆ Experience in SNF and HH setting
- ◆ Traveled in 8 states (so far)...

What is Travel Therapy

- ◇ A temporary position created due to many factors including-
 - ◇ undesirable areas
 - ◇ Permanent Employee quitting/fired
 - ◇ Increase in caseload
 - ◇ High employee turnovers
 - ◇ Etc.

The Jargon

Traveler (Contractor)- Person who takes a temporary travel contract

Contract/Travel Company- Business whose job is to find contract positions for travelers

Recruiter- Individual who works for Travel company AND with Travelers to find jobs

Contract- Legal document that contains agreed upon employment (more later on this)

Facility- Company who requires Traveler to cover due to limited staff

Permanent staff- employees working for contract company on full time basis

Tax Home/Permanent Residence- Place you call home when not traveling

Basic Steps to finding a Contract

- ◇ Find recruiter/recruiters
- ◇ Recruiter provides you with facilities who need you so you can narrow down.
- ◇ Prior to phone interview you/your recruiter should have a basic idea of-
 - ◇ Location (city/state)
 - ◇ Setting (HH, SNF, hospital, OP, etc)
 - ◇ Approx. pay rate (make sure you understand Net vs Gross pay)
 - ◇ Any time off you need during the contract
- ◇ Phone interview
- ◇ Receive offer/contract (read carefully)
- ◇ Accept or attempt to negotiate Contract

Contract

- ◆ Includes information about position you are accepting-
 - ◆ Start date/End dates
 - ◆ Location you will be working
 - ◆ Hourly wage and Overtime/Holiday pay
 - ◆ House/meal stipends (tax free)
 - ◆ Time off during contract
 - ◆ Sometimes has productivity requirements (watch out for that)
 - ◆ **Cancellation Clause**

Fred's first Contract

- ◇ Fred is an OT, and wants to start travel therapy.
- ◇ First Fred has to find a good recruiter. Fred needs to be sure to find
 - ◇ Someone ethical and honest
 - ◇ Someone available both before the contract, in the middle of the contract, and at the end
 - ◇ Someone who listens to what Fred wants
- ◇ Fred thinks he found one in Sarah.

Fred's first interview

- ◇ Fred tells Sarah he only wants to go to California
- ◇ Fred has to get licensed
- ◇ Fred gets notified of 20 OT positions in California...
- ◇ Fred has to narrow down what he really wants (OP, hospital, School, HH, SNF, etc.)
- ◇ Fred looks at a number of factors involved including approx. pay, housing availability, productivity/EMR system used, etc.
- ◇ Fred decides on San Diego

The Interview vs Reality

- ◆ Fred gets a call from San Diego, and is told the SNF is a 300 bed, has 85% productivity, he will have 2 COTA's to oversee, a couple rehab techs, orientation to the new documentation system, and an 8-5PM scheduled day.
- ◆ **Reality-**
 - ◆ Fred gets to the building and discovers he is expected to float between this building and one on the other side of town where he is to over see an additional 2 COTAs because that OT just quit.
 - ◆ Fred is still expected to maintain the 85% productivity, but there are no rehab techs
 - ◆ Fred's orientation consists of a 10 minute tour of the building and a daily schedule with 5 hours of patient to be seen.
 - ◆ Fred is there until 7PM trying to figure out the documentation

Housing/Location

- ◇ Fred did not do his homework before signing the contract, and discovers that another travel therapist is making \$200 a week more than he is.
- ◇ Fred finds out after he has been there 3 weeks that there is no way possible to keep the productivity requiring while traveling between buildings and doing supervisory visits with 4 COTAs
- ◇ Fred discovers that housing in San Diego is \$2,000 a month for a shared apartment with a... okay very strange, clean freak who works night shifts and expects complete silence if he is sleeping.
- ◇ What can Fred do?
- ◇ Oh, and Sarah has stopped responding to his calls...

Jane's first Contract

- ◆ Jane is an OT, and also wants to start Travel therapy
- ◆ Jane (like Fred) must find a recruiter. Jane does a little more research, and asks for recommendations from other traveler friends.
- ◆ Jane finds Steve and Terry (many people use multiple recruiters)

Jane's First Interview

- ◆ Jane tells Terry and Steve she only wants to go to small, rural areas (no big cities)
- ◆ Jane is licensed in Montana and Texas, but decides to also get California license at Steve's recommendation
- ◆ Jane gets notified of 20 OT positions with Terry, and 10 OT positions with Steve
- ◆ Steve has only small, rural towns, and Terry is trying to convince Jane to go Big with places like Houston, NYC, and Dallas
- ◆ Jane has researched each city, and has found that housing is not affordable in most of the one's Terry is offering.
- ◆ Jane decides to **try** for 2 positions with Steve, and 1 position with Terry

Interview vs. Reality

- ◆ Jane gets a call from Dallas and is told it's a SNF, 250 beds, 1 other OT who works PRN, 80% productivity, and 1 week orientation.
- ◆ Jane also gets a call from Great Falls Montana and is told it's also a SNF, 300 bed, 1 COTA and 1 PRN OT, 80% productivity.
- ◆ Jane asks for more details as to if this is only one building, and what she should do if caseload drops?
 - ◆ Dallas tells her there's another facility she could possibly cover
 - ◆ Great Falls tells her they could probably find something for her to do as she is guaranteed 40hrs a week.

Interview vs. Reality

- ◆ Jane goes with her instincts and chooses Great Falls
- ◆ She LOVES Great falls. The staff is really appreciative she is there, and welcomes her like a member of the family.
- ◆ By the time Jane's contract is up, they are asking her to extend another 3 months.
- ◆ When Jane finally leaves, she has learned so much from the staff as one PT is trained in NDT therapy, and the COTA has years of experience in both Lymphedema and Trachs
- ◆ Jane is 1 month into her additional 3 month extension, when she is given her 30 day notice because they were able to hire a full time staff.
- ◆ Everyone is sad to see Jane leave, but that is the life of a traveler...

Summary

- ◆ Travel therapy allows you to go to many for 3-9 months at a time.
- ◆ It is a Temporary position, and you may get a contract cancelation if the facility finds a permanent employee.
- ◆ Travel contracts exist, but not always where you want them, and for how much you want to be paid. Travel therapy mantra is be flexible.
- ◆ Be sure you understand what you are signing/agreeing to. If no, ask questions until you do!
- ◆ Be sure to do your homework on each location/offer BEFORE agreeing/signing the contract.
- ◆ Travel therapy will help you to grow as a clinician and a person if you let it.
- ◆ Most importantly- Why do you want to travel?



Any
Questions?

Travel Occupational Therapy Resources

1. Nomadicare.com- Travel therapy resource for information on how to negotiate contracts, find reputable recruiters, and all the other ins and out of travel therapy. (Also has a very helpful facebook page)
2. Travel Therapy Therapists- Facebook group only open to travel therapists (no recruiters or bosses allowed) to share and support each other with locations, companies, and recruiters.
3. Housing-
 - a. Airbnb.com
 - b. VRBO.com
 - c. Travel Nursing: Places/Rooms for Rent
 - d. Nomadic Nursing- A Travel Nurse Housing page
 - e. Travel Nurse housing: The gypsy nurse
 - f. FurnishedFinder.com
 - g. Fellow Therapist's you will meet along the way
4. TravelTax.com- Questions about taxes for travel therapists? A former travel therapist turned CPA provided help with doing taxes the right way, and is also a great source for any questions about taxes, tax homes, etc.