

Author Karen Frank Barney to be Featured on Close Up Radio

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Occupational therapy and aging aren't two concepts that are often brought together, but Karen Frank Barney has spent her life helping older and incarcerated adults achieve a better quality of life with occupational therapy. Author of *Occupational Therapy with Aging Adults, Promoting Quality of Life Through Collaborative Practice*, Karen worked with 82 leaders in gerontology and occupational therapy to publish the second edition, coming out this fall.

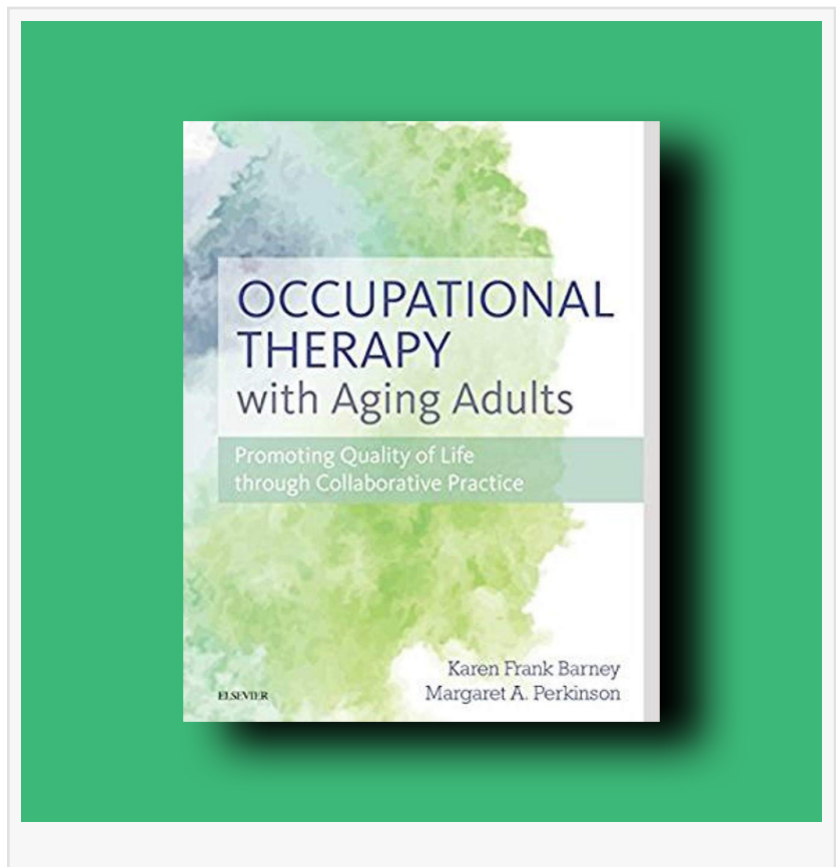


"Since earning my emeritus status at Saint Louis University, I wanted to include content I have been working on

since 2013 related to a rehabilitation model for people being released from prison. When coming out of the hospital, we receive detailed instructions, or a collaboration with the staff, on how to best care for ourselves. Prisons in America are nothing like this; rehabilitation is not part of the program. I was fortunate to be put in the position of Director for the Prison Education Program at SLU while the founder was on sabbatical. The inspiration for this synthesis was the incarceration of my own son, so I'm very passionate about this topic. I really got to know the inside of prison operations," shares Karen. "Our Prison Education Program performs baseline assessments of prisoners, men and women, who are about to be released. It then sets short- and long-term goals to work on during their incarceration as well as when on the outside."

SLU's Prison Education Program continues to support these individuals immediately after discharge. "We continue with them for as long as it takes to make sure they have the three basic necessities required for successful transition. Everyone, including recent releases, must have housing, transportation, and employment to succeed, and our program emphasizes these

necessities. We also focus on activities, or we call them occupations, that comprise everyone's lives. These occupations include everything from sleeping, getting prepared for the day, organizing the day, and carrying out whatever needs to get done, as well as socialization and recreation. I am also very concerned for older adults in prisons as all who are incarcerated barely receive medical services. When older prisoners are on their way to death, they are assigned another, younger prisoner to assist them. But that younger person is not educated in occupational therapy, health needs, or the death process," explains Karen.



Occupation therapy refers to what we do throughout our everyday lives, whereas physical therapy is more about anatomy and how the body functions. "Occupational therapists take the same gross anatomy courses that physical therapists take, as we have to know how people use their bodies to do what they do in their everyday activities to help them adapt. For example, a very dear friend, now deceased, lived from age 21 to 75 with a high-level spinal cord injury. He had been the director of one of the first independent living centers in the United States. People suffering from paralysis still need meaning in their lives. So, we use a lot of materials to adapt ordinary items, such as a paintbrush or a book. We created a mouth stick so he could paint and turn the pages in a book. That's just one example of what we're doing," shares Karen. "Now, a mouth stick is a very simple assistive device. With technology, we have very sophisticated forms, such as automated home devices to enable persons with disabilities and older adults function fully in their homes."

Robotics are another example. "About three years ago, my husband and I had to give up our beloved dog. Living on the 12th floor of a condo in downtown St. Louis, we were very careful about making sure our dog would get out at least three times a day, but her energy level made controlling her outside a bit difficult. So, we ended up giving her to our daughter's family (and our granddaughter is thrilled, as she'd wanted a dog for years). But I was really missing this dog, and so we tried a robot dog designed for people suffering with dementia. Battery operated, it barks softly and interacts with humans just like a real dog, all without having to go outside. It really has been a great emotional support for us," explains Karen.

Thirty years of age is typically human's physical peak. "That's why the book is geared toward aging adults, as we're all aging after age 30. I wanted to include everyone who is on decline,

whether physical, or psychological, for a variety of reasons. We know that, on average, older adults have 40% less muscle mass than younger adults. Physical decline is a natural part of life. Keeping our bodies functional throughout our adult ages, is essential for quality of life. With proper therapy and other interventions, that 40% can be mitigated and even reversed. Exercise can be as simple as taking a walk to the store rather than driving. My husband and I are both in our early 80s and we've been working with a trainer for a decade," shares Karen. "We do strengthening exercises, balance activities, and cardio-related activities because we know if we don't, our quality of life will diminish."

Occupational Therapy with Aging Adults is available on Amazon

Close Up Radio will feature Karen Frank Barney in an interview with Doug Llewelyn on Monday August 5th at 5pm EST

Listen to the show on [BlogTalkRadio](#)

If you have any questions for our guest, please call (347) 996-3389

For more information about Karen Frank Barney, please visit <https://www.slu.edu/doisy/faculty/barney-karen.php>

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