

Retired Professor of Occupational Therapy Glen Gillen of Columbia University Recently Featured on Close Up Radio

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, May 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Healthcare is rapidly evolving, and Glen Gillen, recently retired Professor of Rehabilitation, Regenerative Medicine, and Occupational Therapy at Columbia University, remains a strong advocate for keeping the human connection at its core. With nearly forty years of experience in hospital-based care and a leading role in national advocacy initiatives, Dr. Gillen brings a refreshing perspective to a field increasingly dominated by technology and automation.

Dr. Gillen has championed the approach known variously as “patient-centered care,” “client-centered care,” or, as he prefers, “person-centered care.” Gillen’s preference for person-centered care reflects his commitment to language that humanizes healthcare. “When you’re in a hospital, you’re not just a patient, you’re a person,” he notes. “It’s essential for care to be personalized and collaborative, not hierarchical.”



Redefining the Care Dynamic

Drawing on decades as both a seasoned clinician and a recent hospital patient himself, Dr. Gillen advocates for a model where healthcare professionals and patients engage as partners. “There should never be a hierarchy with the professional above the patient,” he explains. “Instead, it’s about genuine communication, presenting options, and respecting each person’s expertise in their own body.”

Examples from Gillen’s own practice highlight the effectiveness of this approach. When treating

chronic disease or injury, he emphasizes listening to patients' preferences and histories. "Many people know exactly what works and what doesn't work for them. Our job, as healthcare professionals, is to listen and collaborate, not dictate," he explains. This partnership not only increases the likelihood of positive outcomes but also enhances trust and satisfaction on both sides of the healthcare equation.

A Thoughtful Critique of Technology's Expanding Role in Healthcare

While Dr. Gillen acknowledges the potential benefits of technology and AI in medicine, he cautions against over-reliance. "There's no substitute for dialogue. AI can provide useful support, but it can't replace the understanding and nuance that comes from human interaction, especially in healthcare," he says.

His own experience "GPT-ing" himself, only to find mistaken information and confusion with another Glen Gillen (a bodybuilder in Ireland), underscores the dangers of relying on data scraped from the internet. "It's not ready for prime time in clinical settings. The risk for error is high, and person-centered care gets lost in the process."

Championing Evidence-Based, Responsible Practice: The Choosing Wisely Movement

Dr. Gillen's advocacy extends to national efforts such as the American Board of Internal Medicine's Choosing Wisely initiative. Serving as a project lead for the American Occupational Therapy Association, he helped healthcare professionals identify and eliminate unnecessary tests and procedures. "For far too long, we've been telling patients what to do. Choosing Wisely flips the script, helping patients know what they should question and when another approach might be safer or more effective," Dr. Gillen explains.

He encourages both patients and providers to visit [ChoosingWisely.org](https://www.choosingwisely.org), which provides accessible information to help everyone make informed decisions about their care. "It's a simple, practical tool that supports conversations between people and their healthcare providers. I use it myself."

Advancing the Field: Publishing and Mentorship

Dr. Gillen's influence extends far beyond the clinic and classroom. He is the lead editor of Willard and Spackman's "Occupational Therapy," the field's most widely used textbook since 1947, now in its 15th edition. With more than 200 contributors globally, the book distills best practices for occupational therapists worldwide.

He is also co-authoring "Power for Practice," a guide to evidence-based assessment and intervention. Despite retirement, his dedication to writing, editing, and mentoring continues to shape the next generation of therapists.

Service Beyond Academia

Outside his academic work, Dr. Glen Gillen started the Occupational Therapy program with Columbia Harlem Health and Medical Partnership supporting the residents of the Harlem community and beyond. He also enjoys training guide dogs for the blind, aligning his clinical background with his passion for service and animal companionship.

About Glen Gillen, EdD, OTR, FAOTA

Dr. Gillen holds a Doctor of Education in Health Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, a Master of Public Administration in Health Management from New York University, and a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy from NYU. He is the recipient of the Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lectureship Award from the American Occupational Therapy Association and has contributed over 200 research articles and textbooks to the field.

Dr. Gillen's voice is a timely reminder that, even as technology reshapes the possibilities of medicine, the core of healthcare must remain profoundly human. Author of "Stroke Rehabilitation: A Function-Based Approach," and "Cognitive and Perceptual Rehabilitation: Optimizing Function," he is a national leader in evidence-based occupational therapy and a passionate advocate for person-centered care.

Close Up Radio recently featured Glen Gillen in an interview with Doug Llewelyn on Friday May 1st at 2pm Eastern

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For more information about Glen Gillen, please visit <https://www.24-7pressrelease.com/press-release/527202/marquis-whos-who-honors-glen-gillen-edd-otr-faota-for-expertise-in-health-care-and-higher-education/>

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