Dr Denise Andrea Harris

PhD, Occupational Therapist



Types of Reports Undertaken: Quantum Occupational Therapy Reports and Combined Care & OT Reports
Locations covered: Yorkshire & Humber, North East, North West, West Midlands, East Midlands
Client Age categories: Adults

Specialisms:

- Brain Injury
- Clinical Negligence
- End of Life
- Falls
- Healthcare Education
- Housing Adaptations
- Motor Neurone
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Musculoskeletal
- Neurology
- Neurorehabilitation
- Orthopaedics
- Palliative Care
- Parkinsons
- Progressive Neurological Diseases
- Spinal Injury
- Stroke
- Trauma

Profile:

I am an independent consultant occupational therapist, researcher, publisher and educator with 23 years' experience assessing and treating clients across the NHS, Social Services and private sector. My principal clinical specialism is progressive neurological disease.

I began my career in NHS trusts, working in acute orthopaedics, spinal injuries and stroke services. I joined Bury Council Disability Services, where I assessed clients for aids and housing adaptations to support independent living at home. As my career developed, I was seconded to lecture in the Directorate of Occupational Therapy at the University of Salford and I then worked part-time at the University alongside NHS Community Occupational Therapy Rehabilitation Services. This gave me extensive experience supporting people at home with progressive neurological diseases—including motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis and Huntington's disease—as well as acquired brain and spinal injuries and their wider impact on people's lives. I have also worked with the NHS Urgent Community/Rapid Response Service, a nurse-led multidisciplinary team providing urgent care to adults at home to prevent avoidable hospital admission. During this time, my mother was diagnosed with progressive bulbar palsy motor neurone disease. My experience as both a professional and a family carer led me to return to the University of Salford to undertake a PhD/GTA. I have worked as a locum therapist and gained experience in palliative and end-of-life care, and falls services.

I completed a multi-phase study using hermeneutic phenomenology and autoethnography. My PhD, *Interpreting the Meaning of Existence for the Person with Motor Neurone Disease and their Family Carer(s)*, led to six published papers and the development of the 'Temporal Model of Care'. I have presented this research and model at national and international conferences to professionals and students interested in applying the approach.

In 2023, I authored the book chapter 'There is more to a person than MND'. It outlines my research journey and published papers and explains how the proposed model centres individuality through three key elements: presuppositions, acceptance and temporality.

I founded the independent practice 'The Lifeworld Approach to Care' and have worked as an associate with Amber Case Management, Heads Up Therapies and Maggie Sargent & Associates. As an occupational therapist and care expert, I assess each person's circumstances, including their lived experience across the past, present and previously anticipated future, the losses they have experienced and their rehabilitation potential. I then recommend practical support to help them regain, as far as possible, the life they had before illness or injury.

Qualifications & Memberships:

- Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care/Nursing, MMU, 2020
- Master of Philosophy, School of Health Sciences, University of Salford, Manchester, 2014
- Master of Research, School of Health Sciences, Lancaster University, Lancaster, 2009
- BSc Hons Occupational Therapy, University of Salford, Manchester, 2003
- Healthcare Professions Council Registered
- Member of Royal College of Occupational Therapists (since 2003)

Publications:

1. Harris, D.A. (2024) There is more to a person than motor neurone disease. Palliative Care - Current Practice and Future Perspectives. Intech Open. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1002326.
2. Harris, D.A. (2020) Interpreting the Meaning of Existence for the Person with Motor Neurone Disease and their Family Carer(s). PhD Thesis: Manchester Metropolitan University.
3. Harris DA, Jack K, Wibberley C. There is a need to consider 'temporality' in person-centred care of people with motor neurone disease. J Evaluation in Clinical Practice. 2023; Vol 29, No.5, 802-807 doi:10.1111/jep.1 854
4. Harris, D. (2021) Interpreting end-of-life experiences of the person with motor neurone disease. Palliative and Supportive Care, 1–2. doi.org/10.1017/S147895152100 699
5. Harris, D.A., Jack, K. and Wibberley, C. (2019) Making her end of life her own: further reflections on supporting a loved one with motor neurone disease. International Journal of Palliative Care Nursing, Vol 25, No.6, 284-292 doi.org/10.12968/ijpn.2019.25.6 284
6. Harris, D.A., Jack, K. and Wibberley, C. (2018) The meaning of living with uncertainty for people with motor neurone disease. Journal of Clinical Nursing, 27, 2062-2071. doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14 50
7. Harris, D.A. (2017) Doing research drawing on the philosophy of existential hermeneutic phenomenology. Palliative and Supportive Care 15, 2 7–269. doi.org/10.1017/S147895151600 377
8. Harris, D.A. (2017) Supporting a loved one living with motor neurone disease. Palliative and Supportive Care 15, 1 1–142. doi.org/10.1017/S147895151600 134
9. Harris, D.A. (2015) Lived-through past, experienced present, anticipated future: Understanding "existential loss" in the context of life-limiting illness. Palliative and Supportive Care 13, 1579–1594. doi.org/10.1017/S1478951515000620
10. Harris, D. and Fineberg, I.C. (2011) Multidisciplinary palliative care teams' understanding of Mental Capacity Act 2005 'best interest' determinations. International Journal of Palliative Nursing. Vol.17 Number 1. pp 20-23