Grant Number: K01HP33441
Organization Name: Dominican University of California
Title: Occupational Therapy and Interprofessional Education to Support Health, Well-Being and Quality of Life for Older Adults with Cognitive Impairment and Mental Illness
Program Director: Gina Tucker-Roghi, OTD, OTR/L, BCG

Dr. Gina Tucker-Roghi is a licensed occupational therapist and an Assistant Professor at Dominican University of California. She is board certified in Gerontology by the American Occupational Therapy Association. The focus of her Geriatric Academic Career Award (GACA) project is to expand the impact of occupational therapy (OT) practitioners on the lives of older adults with dementia and their caregivers by increasing opportunities for OTs to apply their distinct skills as a part of interprofessional care teams. OTs are skilled in environmental and task modification, which are essential tools for supporting engagement in occupations of daily life, such as; leisure, socialization, self-care, and health-management. OTs also use an in-depth occupational profile to better understand the life long habits, routines, preferences and values of individuals with dementia. The occupational profile provides a strong foundation for person-centered care for individuals living with dementia.

The overarching goals of Dr. Tucker-Roghi's GACA project are to: 1) develop engaging, evidence-based educational resources that build the skills and knowledge of OTs and other healthcare professionals, caregivers and community members, 2) provide impactful and effective evidence-informed education for OTs and other healthcare-professionals, caregivers, and community members on dementia care, and 3) increase the understanding of key stakeholders on the importance of engagement in meaningful occupations and the distinct value of OT interventions for improving health, wellbeing and quality of life for individuals with dementia and their caregivers. As a GACA recipient, Dr. Tucker-Roghi has engaged in professional development activities to prepare for leadership as a geriatric educator.

Dr. Tucker-Roghi is the faculty advisor for Dominican Student Interprofessional Special Interest Group on Aging (SI-SIGA) and is a member of the Dominican Interprofessional Education Committee. Dr. Tucker-Roghi develops opportunities for student learning through the creation of interprofessional curricular and co-curricular learning activities, including community engaged learning activities that provide opportunities for students to explore ageism and breakdown stigma and ageist views as they interact with community dwelling older adults in their community.

In collaboration with Vivalon, a community-based organization in Marin County, Dr. Tucker-Roghi created an innovative 12-week community-based OT fieldwork rotation where she and her OT students developed and implemented a healthy aging program and provided OT services for community-dwelling older adults. Dr. Tucker-Roghi also educates teams of OT capstone students who develop evidence-informed training and education programs for OTs who work in skilled nursing facilities and provide services for individuals with dementia. These training programs are made available to therapists who work in SNFs around the county. Dr. Tucker-Roghi and her teams of OT capstone students have presented their OT training programs to improve dementia care at the annual conferences of the Occupational Therapy Association of California and the American Occupational Therapy Association.

Dr. Tucker-Roghi is an active member of the American Geriatrics Society Special Interest Group on Age-Friendly Health Systems in Long Term Support Services. She recently collaborated with this group on a symposium submission for the 2022 Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Annual Scientific Meeting. In November of 2021 she presented a poster session on her work with colleagues from Sonoma County Council on Aging titled *Interdisciplinary Community-Based Support for Caregivers of Individuals Living with Dementia* at the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting.