

ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

(Text of the WFOT Pamphlet)

WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

Occupational Therapy is a health care profession based on the knowledge that purposeful activity can promote health and well-being in all aspects of daily life.

The aims are to promote, develop, restore and maintain abilities needed to cope with daily activities to prevent dysfunction. Programs are designed to facilitate maximum use of function to meet demands of the person's working, social, personal and domestic environment. The essential feature of occupational therapy is the active involvement of the person in the therapeutic process. Occupational therapists receive education in social, psychological, biological and medical sciences, professional skills and methods. Fieldwork studies form an integral part of the course.

WHERE DO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS WORK?

Occupational therapists work with all age groups and in a wide range of physical and psychosocial areas.

Places of employment may include hospitals, clinics, day and rehabilitation centres, home care programmes, special schools, industry and private enterprise.

Many occupational therapists work in private practice and as educators and consultants.

HOW DO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS WORK?

Assessment

The occupational therapy process is based on initial and repeated assessments. The occupational therapist together with the person seeking help will focus on individual and environmental abilities and problems related to activities in the person's daily life.

Assessment includes the use of standardised procedures, interviews, observations in a variety of settings and consultation with significant people in the person's life.

Planning

The results of the assessment are the basis of the plan which includes short and long-term aims of treatment. The plan should be relevant to the person's development stage, habits, roles, life-style preferences and the environment.

Intervention

Intervention focuses on programs that are person oriented and environmental. These designed to facilitate performance of everyday tasks and adaptation of settings in which the person works, lives and socialises. Examples include teaching new techniques and providing equipment which facilitate independence in personal care, reducing environmental barriers and providing resources to lessen stress.

Cooperation

Occupational therapists recognise the importance of teamwork. Cooperation and coordination with other professionals, families, carers and volunteers are important in the realisation of the holistic approach.