

What Is Occupational Therapy?

Posted on July 26, 2022

Scope and Purpose of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is one of the branches of health care that focuses on assisting individuals who have any sensory, physical, or cognitive disability. The ultimate goal of the training is to provide them with independence so that they can carry out their life activities more accurately and independently. An [occupational therapist](#) helps in gaining independence by overcoming the physical or emotional barriers that hinder everyday life activities. A therapist evaluates the goals and objectives of the person by analyzing his actions, likings, and preferences and then brainstorming to come up with a plan that can help the person reach his/her goal. Depending upon the requirements, occupational therapy can help in accomplishing fine motor skills, acquiring better hand-eye coordination, anger and frustration management, and mastering the necessary daily life activities.

Work Settings and Patient Populations

Occupational therapists can work in several settings; the percentage of the population that can benefit from occupational therapy is quite broad. The most frequently observed work setting for occupational therapists is related to nursing, in hospitals, and in assisting patients advised with long-term care. However, on a larger scale, occupational therapists have been seen to be serving in Academia, Community Services, Early Intervention, Freestanding Outpatient, Home-Health-Hospital (Non-Mental Health), skilled nursing facility LTC/SNF, long-term care, Mental Health, Schools, and other settings. My primary area of interest is treatment processes for school, home, and community.

Autism and the Case of Brock

Though autism is one of the common disorders, it was no sooner than ott's shifted in our neighborhood, and I happened to know about autism, Brock was the youngest of the four children of the Ott family. As a child, Brock exhibited differences from the children of his age; the differences were mainly his restlessness and the inability to interact socially. Later, he tends to see more apparent signs like toe-walking. Moreover, his speech grew more uncomprehensive. When he was six, he was admitted to the community school, the old school thought, and conventional practices of the teachers couldn't tackle him. Just at that age, when his fellows were learning loads of new things daily, he started to be troubled with learning the names of the family members. While his fellows wanted to have new experiences daily, he got unrealistically fixated on particular things, like playing with the same toy each time in the same manner. However, things didn't work well, and eventually, I abandoned the school. A year later, and struggling with the psychiatrist and physicians, he was

diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and finally started getting autism-specific intervention. Further treatment identified the physiological reasoning behind his lack and helped his teachers select the curriculum according to his capabilities. Over the years, the improvements in his behaviour were recognizable.

School-Based Occupational Therapy

Recently, I happened to come across research published in the “American Journal of Occupational Therapy”, which aimed to treat the same autism spectrum disorder with occupational therapy in a school setting. The research presented a case study of Jimmy, a junior public student who has ASD; although the school facilitated him in his unique needs, he still exhibited frustration in socializing; although he was fond of cooking, he had trouble handling the goods and remembering the recipes, he also faced difficulty in making friends. The school-based occupational therapist identified the four areas in which Jimmy needed to be evaluated: concerns and priorities, daily living, and developing social skills to make friends; she further took notes on other homework, including the parent and teacher.

Social Skills and Daily-Living Interventions

Contribution towards the behaviour. As a result of the assessments, she found strong evidence for social skill training and video modelling techniques for promoting independence. She further felt a moderate need for “instrumental activity of daily living (IADL)” and increased participation in the social clubs selected based on the criteria of interest to improve social interaction. Thus, this occupational therapy helped him raise his attendance in the culinary club to 90% from 25%; moreover, after the intervention, he could prepare meals himself, and he proficiently did an internship with one of the friends he made from the social group. The research focused on the treatment mode, which was evidence-based, occupationally focused and client-based (Tomchek, 2017).

Emerging Evidence for School Participation

Occupational therapy intervention has recently emerged as a more potent treatment technique. Various research studies are focused on bringing the potential of occupational therapy to curing disorders. Another study has highlighted the significance of understanding the main role of OT in improving the contribution of students with particular needs. Students who are not diagnosed with autism spectrum disease can exhibit significant improvement in social interactions, as occupational therapy practitioners can employ various service delivery models to meet the needs of students (Leigers, 2013). Another critical review confirmed the schools as the primary stakeholders in the application of occupational therapy. The practitioners can use the intervention approaches and can potentially broaden the target potential (Patrícia, 2020).

Conclusion on Occupational Therapy in Schools

Thus, occupational therapy, if employed in schools, can bring notable changes in the lives of students with special needs. Also, it will provide accessibility to therapy to a larger population.

References

- Tomchek, S., Koenig, K. P., Arbesman, M., & Lieberman, D. (2017). Occupational Therapy Interventions for Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy: official publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association*, 71(1), 7101395010p1-7101395010p3. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2017.711003>
- Leigers, K., Myers, C., & Schneck, C. (2016). Social Participation in Schools: A Survey of Occupational Therapy Practitioners. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy: official publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association*, 70(5), 7005280010p1-7005280010p9. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2016.020768>
- Patrícia L. de Oliveira Borba, Beatriz P. Pereira, Joana R. B. de Souza, Roseli E. Lopes. (2020). Occupational Therapy Research in Schools: A Mapping Review. *Occupational Therapy International*, vol. 2020, Article ID 5891978, 9 pages, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/5891978>