

STATEMENT ON OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

Occupational therapists have a broad education in the medical, social behavioural, psychological, psychosocial and occupational sciences which equips them with the attitudes, skills and knowledge to work collaboratively with people, individually or in groups or communities. Occupational therapists can work with all people, including those who have an impairment of body structure or function owing to a health condition, or who are restricted in their participation or who are socially excluded owing to their membership of social or cultural minority groups.

Occupational therapists believe that participation can be supported or restricted by the physical, affective or cognitive abilities of the individual, the characteristics of the occupation, or the physical, social, cultural, attitudinal and legislative environments. Therefore, occupational therapy practice is focused on enabling individuals to change aspects of their person, the occupation, the environment, or some combination of these to enhance occupational participation.

Occupational therapy is practised in a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector settings, such as, the person's home environment; schools; workplaces; health centres; supported accommodation; housing for seniors; rehabilitation centres; hospitals; and forensic services. Clients are actively involved in the occupational therapy process. The outcomes are client-driven and diverse and measured in terms of participation, satisfaction derived from occupational participation and / or improvement in occupational performance. The majority of countries regulate occupational therapy as a health profession and require specific university level education.

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