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PUBLIC STATEMENT

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on the lives, health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities worldwide.

In occupational therapy, occupations refer to the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families and with communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life. Occupations include activities people need to, want to and are expected to do¹. Occupational justice is the fulfilment of the right for all people to engage in the occupations they need to survive, define as meaningful, and that contribute positively to their own well-being and the wellbeing of their communities².

As a profession we recognise the consequences and changes that are occurring in how people access and undertake their occupations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include, but are not limited to: accessing resources, activities of daily living, communication, mobility, social isolation, displacement, mental health and wellbeing. Occupational therapists understand the vital need to access and use infection control measures combined with the need to sustain good psychological, mental health and stamina in order to stay safe and healthy.

Occupational therapists will be working with people to develop strategies to facilitate continued access to their occupations. These will include, but will not be limited to: individual, family, community, social and environmental adaptation, mental health³, assistive technology⁴ and telehealth⁵.

As the international organisation for the occupational therapy profession, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) is engaging with the World Health Organization's meetings, briefings and strategy development.

More information regarding occupational therapy is available from the WFOT website <https://wfot.org/about-occupational-therapy>.

References

- 1 [Definition of Occupational Therapy](#)
- 2 [Position Statement – Occupational Therapy and Human Rights](#)
- 3 [Position Statement – Occupational Therapy and Mental Health](#)
- 4 [Position Statement – Occupational Therapy and Assistive Technology](#)
- 5 [Position Statement – Occupational Therapy and Telehealth](#)