

Definition of Occupational Therapy Practice for the AOTA Model Practice Act

The practice of occupational therapy means the therapeutic use of everyday life activities (occupations) with individuals or groups for the purpose of participation in roles and situations in home, school, workplace, community, and other settings. Occupational therapy services are provided for the purpose of promoting health and wellness and to those who have or are at risk for developing an illness, injury, disease, disorder, condition, impairment, disability, activity limitation, or participation restriction. Occupational therapy addresses the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory, and other aspects of performance in a variety of contexts to support engagement in everyday life activities that affect health, well-being, and quality of life.

The practice of occupational therapy includes:

A. Methods or strategies selected to direct the process of interventions such as:

1. Establishment, remediation, or restoration of a skill or ability that has not yet developed or is impaired.
2. Compensation, modification, or adaptation of activity or environment to enhance performance.
3. Maintenance and enhancement of capabilities without which performance in everyday life activities would decline.
4. Health promotion and wellness to enable or enhance performance in everyday life activities.
5. Prevention of barriers to performance, including disability prevention.

B. Evaluation of factors affecting activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), education, work, play, leisure, and social participation, including:

1. Client factors, including body functions (such as neuromuscular, sensory, visual, perceptual, cognitive) and body structures (such as cardiovascular, digestive, integumentary, genitourinary systems).
2. Habits, routines, roles, and behavior patterns.
3. Cultural, physical, environmental, social, and spiritual contexts and activity demands that affect performance.
4. Performance skills, including motor, process, and communication/interaction skills.

C. Interventions and procedures to promote or enhance safety and performance in activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), education, work, play, leisure, and social participation, including:

1. Therapeutic use of occupations, exercises, and activities.
2. Training in self-care, self-management, home management, and community/work reintegration.
3. Development, remediation, or compensation of physical, cognitive, neuromuscular, sensory functions and behavioral skills.
4. Therapeutic use of self, including one's personality, insights, perceptions, and judgments, as part of the therapeutic process.
5. Education and training of individuals, including family members, caregivers, and others.
6. Care coordination, case management, and transition services.
7. Consultative services to groups, programs, organizations, or communities.
8. Modification of environments (home, work, school, or community) and adaptation of processes, including the application of ergonomic principles.
9. Assessment, design, fabrication, application, fitting, and training in assistive technology, adaptive devices, and orthotic devices, and training in the use of prosthetic devices.
10. Assessment, recommendation, and training in techniques to enhance functional mobility, including wheelchair management.
11. Driver rehabilitation and community mobility.
12. Management of feeding, eating, and swallowing to enable eating and feeding performance.
13. Application of physical agent modalities, and use of a range of specific therapeutic procedures (such as wound care management; techniques to enhance sensory, perceptual, and cognitive processing; manual therapy techniques) to enhance performance skills.

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