Philosophical Base of Occupational Therapy

*Occupations* are everyday activities that bring meaning and purpose to the daily lives of persons, groups or populations and enable them to participate in society. All clients, i.e., persons, groups, and populations, have an innate need and right to engage in meaningful occupations throughout their lives. (AJOT, 2020) Participation in these occupations influences their development, health, and well-being across the lifespan. Thus, participation in meaningful occupations is a determinant of health and leads to adaptation.

Occupations occur within diverse contexts that include environmental and personal factors. The quality of occupational performance and the experience of each occupation are unique in each situation because of the dynamic relationship among factors that reside within the person, group, or population, the dynamic interplay among performance patterns, performance skills, and client factors, the characteristics of the occupation, and the contexts in which the occupation occurs.

The focus and outcome of occupational therapy are client’s engagement in meaningful occupations that support their occupational goals, such as occupational performance, prevention, health and wellness, quality of life, participation, role competence, well-being, and occupational justice. (AJOT, 2020). Occupational justice, the “occupational rights to inclusive participation in everyday occupations for all, regardless of age, ability, gender, social class, or other differences” is also viewed as an outcome of intervention (Nilsson & Townsend, 2010, p. 58). Occupational therapy practitioners provide services in a variety of settings and conceptualize occupations as both a means and an end in therapy. That is, there is therapeutic value in occupational engagement as a change agent, and engagement in occupations is also the ultimate goal of therapy.

Occupational therapy is based on the belief that occupations are fundamental to health promotion and wellness, remediation or restoration, health maintenance, disease and injury prevention, and compensation and adaptation. The use of occupation to promote persons, groups or populations health is the core of occupational therapy practice, education, research, and advocacy.

Occupational science is important to the practice of occupational therapy and “provides a way of thinking that enables an understanding of occupation, the occupational nature of humans, the relationship between occupation, health and well-being, and the influences that shape occupation” (WFOT, 2012b, p. 2). Occupational science includes occupational justice and injustice, identity, time use, satisfaction, engagement, and performance as they relate to persons, groups or populations participation in occupation.
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