How To Use
AOTA’s Mental Health Information Sheets

DESCRIPTION

The free downloadable information sheets at http://www.aota.org/Practitioners-Section/Children-and-Youth/Browse/School/Toolkit.aspx were developed for occupational therapy practitioners working with children and youth in school and community settings to obtain specific knowledge about mental health (MH) promotion, prevention, and intervention and to guide service provision. Each information sheet provides an overview of the topic, implications for occupational therapy, and strategies for MH promotion, prevention, and intervention in a variety of settings. Each sheet also provides important references and Internet resources for further reading and resource allocation. These information sheets are intended to provide: 1) foundation information about the topic to familiarize the OT practitioner about the subject; and 2) references and Internet resources to extend learning about the topic.

1. Content draws on current literature about a public health approach to MH emphasizing MH promotion for all children with and without identified disabilities or MH challenges
   - MH Promotion: strategies for optimizing mental health
   - MH Prevention: strategies to reduce mental health problems before identification of a specific mental health problem
   - MH Individual Intervention: strategies to diminish or end the effects of an identified mental health problem after the problem has been identified

2. Services are depicted in tiers (see diagram at right):
   - Tier 1: Universal (for whole population emphasizing promotion and prevention efforts)
   - Tier 2: Targeted (prevention and early intervention for children at risk of developing MH challenges)
   - Tier 3: Intensive individualized interventions (for children already identified with MH challenges or illness)

3. A variety of topics are addressed specific to MH promotion, prevention, and intervention including but not limited to:
   - Mental health literacy
   - Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
   - Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)
   - Obesity
   - Bullying
   - Grieving loss
   - Strength-based approaches
   - Anxiety disorders
   - Depression
   - Thought disorders or Schizophrenia
   - Bipolar disorder
   - Autism spectrum disorder
   - Recess promotion

Continued on the next page

PUBLIC HEALTH MODEL OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

SCHOOL

- Provide individual or group intervention to students with identified mental health concerns.
- Collaborate with the school-based mental health providers to ensure a coordinated system of care for students needing intensive interventions.
- Develop and run group programs to foster social participation for students struggling with peer interaction.
- Consult with teachers to modify learning demands and academic routines for at-risk students.

COMMUNITY

- Individual interventions to support occupational performance and mental health in community settings focusing on leisure, work, and transition-related activities.
- Provide leisure coaching for youth at risk of limited leisure participation.
- Consult with community recreation, youth clubs, sports, and arts programming to promote and support inclusion of youth with disabilities and/or mental health concerns.
- Look for opportunities to provide group interventions for at-risk youth—those dealing with poverty, bullying, loss, obesity.

Tier 3

Tier 2

Tier 1

(Bazyk, 2011, p. 13)
Note: PBS = positive behavioral interventions and supports; SEL = social and emotional learning.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES

• Select and read one of the information sheets prior to a staff meeting. Assign occupational therapy practitioners to read one of the reference articles or review one of the Internet resources and report useful information at the staff meeting.
• Discuss strategies for applying the information at the team’s work site.
• Repeat the process until you have covered all of the information sheets.
• Keep track of how the team addresses MH promotion, prevention, and intervention at Tiers 1, 2, and 3. Articulate occupational therapy’s role in written reports and verbally in team meetings.
• Pair the information sheets with related resources found at the Children and Youth area of the AOTA website http://www.aota.org/Practitioners/PracticeAreas/Pediatrics.aspx. For example, refer to the AOTA pediatric virtual chat (www.talkshoe.com/tc/73733) on obesity after reviewing the “Childhood Obesity” information sheet.

Developed by: Initially developed by occupational therapy students under the supervision of Dr. Susan Bazyk at Cleveland State University in 2010 and used to host a Children’s Mental Health Day open house event. The AOTA School Mental Health workgroup revised these original information sheets in 2011 and 2012.

Contributing authors: Susan Bazyk, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA; Lisa Crabtree, PhD, OTR/L; Donna Downing, MS, OTR/L; Claudette Fette, PhD, OTR, CRC; Deborah Marr, ScD, OTR/L; Laurette Olson, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA; Michael Pizzi, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, and Sandy Schefkind, MS, OTR/L.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
