



Occupational Therapy

Education

Occupational therapists enter the field with a master's degree (MS or MOT) which is the minimal educational requirement. Some therapists enter with an entry level doctoral degree (OTD). Occupational therapy assistants enter with an associate's degree (COTA).

Certifications

Occupational therapy practitioners pass a national examination. Many states also have licensure and are governed by the practice act from the state in which they are licensed.

Occupational therapy practitioners may receive additional certification by the American Occupational Therapy Association. Practitioner may be board certified in: Mental Health, Pediatrics, Gerontology or Physical Rehabilitation. Therapists may receive specialty certification in Driving and Community Mobility, Environmental Modification, Feeding, Eating and Swallowing and Low Vision.

Roles and functions

Occupational therapists rely on their knowledge and skills in the biological, psychological and social sciences. They work with other members of the health care team and use physical and psychosocial methods to help people adapt to or compensate for the physical and emotional affects of disabilities. They help patients achieve independence in all facets of their lives-at home, work, school and community settings through improving their motor function, interaction and reasoning abilities. Occupational therapists work with infants and children with special health needs to help them improve their performance in play, social connections and school. Occupational therapy practitioners work with patients to learn (or re-learn) skills necessary to lead independent productive lives. Examples of skills include bathing, dressing, cooking, driving and using technology. Occupational therapists also provide comprehensive home and job site

evaluations and provide special environmental adaptations and equipment recommendations to help individuals function independently and safely in their environments. Administrator, researcher and educator are additional potential roles.

Practice settings

Occupational therapists work with individuals of all ages in a variety of practice settings. These include (but are not limited to) homes, early intervention centers, schools, hospitals, adult day programs, community centers, group homes, job sites, assisted living, long term care and skilled nursing and hospice programs.

Professional association links for further info on the profession:

www.aota.org

Link to TJU education program

<http://www.jefferson.edu/jchp/jshp/ot/>