

Definitions of Occupational Therapy

Draft 7 – August 2005

This booklet is a working document which will be revised on a regular basis at the request of the Council Meeting of the **World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT)**. The purpose of this booklet is to provide an overview of the way occupational therapists define their profession worldwide and for international comparison.

The 28 definitions gathered during the period 1994-96 by the WFOT Professional Practice Committee (PPC) have been introduced on disk in 1996. **The file is now a Microsoft Word 2000 document.** In 1997, copies of the definitions were sent to the various countries involved for approval or modifications. To-date we have gathered 40 definitions.

Responsibility for the content / wording of these definitions was in the hands of the national member associations of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists. The Promotion and Development Programme of the WFOT has made every effort to confirm the accuracy of these definitions. *If any mistakes have occurred in the transcribing or printing we apologise and request that you let us know immediately so that the corrections will appear in the next edition. If you do not contact us, we will publish the same version next time.*

We ask the member associations from which we did not receive any definition, to send it to the Promotion and Development Programme in their native language along with an English translation for inclusion in the next edition. Please do not hesitate to send any correction, amendment, comment and your opinion on the opportunity to update this edition.

We are looking forward to your reactions, suggestions and exchange of ideas.

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Australia	English	9/1994
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Bangladesh**	English	05/2005
Belgium*	French, Dutch, English	03/2005
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Chile	English	03/1998
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United Kingdom**	English	03/2005
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Venezuela*		01/2003

* Informed no change of Definition

** Change of Definition

+latest update

World Federation of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is a profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by enabling people to do things that will enhance their ability to participate or by modifying the environment to better support participation.

Occupational therapists have a broad education that equips them with skills and knowledge to work collaboratively with individuals or groups of people who have an impairment of body structure or function due to a health condition, and who experience barriers to participation.

Occupational therapists believe that participation can be supported or restricted by physical, social, attitudinal and legislative environments. Therefore, occupational therapy practice may be directed to changing aspects of the environment to enhance participation.

Occupational therapy is practised in a wide range of settings, including hospitals, health centres, homes, workplaces, schools, reform institutions and housing for seniors. Clients are actively involved in the therapeutic process, and outcomes of occupational therapy are diverse, client-driven and measured in terms of participation or satisfaction derived from participation.

Council Meeting 2004

Terapia Ocupacional: Es el estudio, el análisis y la instrumentación de la actividad – ocupación del hombre en relación con las capacidades físicas, psicológicas y de interacción social y cultural, y su utilización como medio de promoción, protección, recuperación y rehabilitación, y la docencia e investigación en el área de la salud.

Occupational Therapy: Is the study, analysis and instrumentation of the human occupation – activity in relation with the physical, psychological, social and cultural interaction ability.

O.T. interventions are means for promotion, protection, recovery and rehabilitation of health. It also includes teaching and research.

July 2004

Australian Association of Occupational Therapists

1. Occupational Therapy is a health related profession using selected activity to prevent and overcome many physical, emotional or social disabilities in people of all ages. The objective is to promote, maintain or restore functional independence in daily living skills.
2. Occupational Therapy is concerned with human occupation and it's importance in health for persons of all ages.
Occupational Therapists evaluate the physical, psychosocial and environmental factors which reduce a person's ability to participate in everyday activities of occupation.

Therapeutic objectives are achieved through techniques or activities designed to:

1. Diminish and control pathology
 2. Restore and/or reinforce functional capacity
 3. Facilitate learning of skills and function essential for adaptation or productivity
 4. Promote and maintain health
3. Occupational Therapy is a health profession which teaches, maintains and promotes competent behaviour in the areas of living, learning and working to individuals experiencing illness, developmental deficits and/or physical and psychological dysfunction or who are otherwise at risk.

September 1994

Verband der diplomierten ErgotherapeutInnen Österreichs
(Austrian Association of Occupational Therapists)

Der ergotherapeutische Dienst umfasst die eigenverantwortliche Behandlung von Kranken und Behinderten nach ärztlicher Verordnung durch handwerkliche und gestalterische Tätigkeiten, das Training der Selbsthilfe und die Herstellung, den Einsatz und die Unterweisung im Gebrauch von Hilfsmitteln einschließlich Schienen zu Zwecken der Prophylaxe, Therapie und Rehabilitation; ohne ärztliche Verordnung die Beratungs- und Schulungstätigkeit sowohl auf dem Gebiet der Ergonomie als auch auf dem Gebiet des allgemeinen Gelenkschutzes an Gesunden.

December 2002

Bangladesh Occupational Therapy Association (BOTA)

Occupational Therapy is a health care profession that provides services to people whose ability to function in daily life has been disrupted. Purposeful activity, therapeutic exercise, special equipment, skills training and environmental modifications are used to maximise the person's ability to attain independence in everyday living."

For more information please visit our official website: www.botabd.netfirms.com

May 2005

Federation Nationale Belge des Ergotherapeutes
Nationale Belgische Federatie van de Ergotherapeuten
(Belgian Association of Occupational Therapists)

L'ergothérapeute est le paramédical qui accompagne les personnes présentant un dysfonctionnement physique, psychique et/ou social en vue de leur permettre d'acquérir, de recouvrer ou de conserver un fonctionnement optimal dans leur vie personnelle, leurs occupations professionnelles ou la sphère de leurs loisirs, par l'utilisation d'activités concrètes, s'y rapportant et tenant compte de leurs potentialités et des contraintes de leur environnement.

De ergotherapeut is de paramedicus die mensen met fysieke, psychische en/of sociale dysfuncties begeleidt met oog op het bevorderen, terugwinnen, en/of in stand houden van het zo zelfstandig mogelijk functioneren in hun persoonlijk leef-, werk- en ontspanningssituatie, via concrete activiteiten daaraan ontleend en rekening houdend met hun draagkracht en de draaglast vanuit hun omgeving.

The occupational therapist is the paramedical who assists patients suffering from a physical, psychic and/or social disability, in order to allow them to acquire, recover or maintain an optimum ability for performing functions required in their daily life, their professional occupations or their sphere of leisure, by using concrete related activities and taking into account the patients potentialities as well as the constraints of their environment.

March 2005

Associação Brasileira de Terapia Ocupacional

É um campo de conhecimento e de intervenção em saúde, educação e na esfera social, reunindo tecnologias orientadas para a emancipação e autonomia de pessoas que, por razões ligadas a problemática, específica, físicas, sensoriais, mentais, psicológicas e ou sociais, apresentam temporariamente ou definitivamente dificuldade na inserção e participação na vida social. As intervenções em Terapia Ocupacional dimensionam pelo uso de atividade, elemento centralizador e orientador, na construção complexa e contextualizada do processo terapêutico.

Occupational Therapy is a field of knowledge and intervention in health, education and social spheres, gathering technologies orientated to the emancipation and autonomy of people. These people, for specific reasons present difficulties in their insertion and participation of social life due to temporary or definitely problems related to their physical, sensory, mental, psychological and social condition.

Occupational Therapy interventions, assess their extent through the use of activities, centralising and guiding element in the complex construction of the therapeutic process.

Definição elaborada pelo curso de Terapia Ocupacional do Departamento de Fisioterapia, Fonoaudiologia e Terapia Ocupacional da Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de São Paulo, 1997

Definition elaborated by the Occupational Therapy Programme of São Paulo University in 1997.

Translated by Michelle Selma Hahn

March 2003

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists

Key Role of Occupational Therapists

Occupational therapists enable individuals, groups and communities to develop the means and opportunities to identify, engage in and achieve desired potential in the occupations of life. The occupational therapist may provide direct services not only to individuals but may also perform functions as manager, researcher, program developer, educator or as part of other professional roles. Their clients may include agencies and organizations as well as individuals or groups. *From: The Profile of Occupational Therapy in Canada, 2001*

Occupation

Occupation is everything people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves (self care), enjoying life (leisure), and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities (productivity). *From: Enabling Occupation, 1997*

Occupation refers to the activities and tasks of daily life that have value and meaning to the individual. Occupation includes self-care (i.e. personal care, mobility), leisure (i.e. social activities, sports) and productivity (i.e. play, school, employment, homemaking). *From: Occupations and Health Position Statement, 1997*

Occupational Therapy: Skills for the Job of Living

Occupational therapy solves the problems that interfere with your ability to do things that interfere with your ability to do the things that are important to you. It can also prevent a problem, or minimize its effects.

When an injury, illness, disability or other problem limits your ability to:

1. Take care of yourself
2. Participate in paid or unpaid work, or
3. Enjoy your leisure time, eg hobbies, sports, spending time with family

Then you may want to learn some new skills for the job of living from an occupational therapist.

Occupational therapists believe that occupations (activities) describe who you are and how you feel about yourself. If you are unable to do the things you want, or need to do, to live and enjoy your life, your general well-being may be affected. *From: "Ask an OT" consumer pamphlet, 2001*

March 2005

Escuela de Terapia Ocupacional
(Occupational Therapy Association of Chile)

Occupational therapy is a discipline of health field whose purpose of study is human occupation in all stages of life.

Human occupation includes all the activities of everyday life in which persons of any age are involved and it allow them to adapt themselves to their environment, to be productive and to obtain satisfactions in their autonomy, work and use of free time.

March 1998

Asociación Colombiana de Terapia Ocupacional
(Colombian Association of Occupational Therapists)

1. La disciplina de la Ocupación Humana, de acuerdo con el método científico, se dirige a explicar problemas de ciencia básica y aplicada relacionados con la naturaleza ocupacional del ser humano y sus disfunciones. A través de su cuerpo suministrados por el Terapeuta Ocupacional, los cuales promueven, conservan o restauran la calidad de vida, o facilitan la integración sociolaboral, por medio de ocupaciones dirigidas con la finalidad de propiciar la independencia, productividad, creatividad, socialización y satisfacción personal.

2. La disciplina de la Ocupación Humana, a partir del método científico, se dirige al estudio, análisis y esclarecimiento de la naturaleza ocupacional del hombre, a fin de lograr el bienestar y calidad de vida del individuo a lo largo de su ciclo vital para actúe adaptativamente en un rango de conductas que le permitan establecer un balance entre trabajo juego, autocuidado, actividades de tiempo libre y responder en términos de identidad y aprendizaje a las necesidades individuales dentro del entorno social-ecológico-cultural.

November 1994

Ergoterapeut foreningen
(Danish Association of Occupational Therapists)

Formålet med ergoterapi er at fremme hverdagslivets aktiviteter for den enkelte borger og grupper af borgere.

Ved hverdagslivets aktiviteter forstås gøremål, der for den enkelte er meningsfulde eller nødvendige og som relaterer sig til dagligdagen, arbejds- og fritidsliv samt involvering i samfundslivet.

I ergoterapi anvendes meningsfulde aktiviteter som middel til at fremme sundhed, forebygge aktivitetstab samt vedligeholde og udvikle aktivitetsformåen.

Ergoterapi kan rettes mod:

- udvikling af personens færdigheder
- graduering af aktiviteten
- tilpasning af omgivelserne

The purpose of Occupational Therapy is to enable every day life occupations for the individual as well as for groups of individuals.

Everyday life occupations are defined as tasks meaningful and /or necessary for the individual and related to daily life, work and leisure, and involvement in community activities.

Within Occupational Therapy meaningful occupations are used as a means to promote health, prevent loss of ability to perform occupations, and sustain and develop ability of occupational performance.

Occupational Therapy is directed toward:

- developing the skills of the individual
- grading occupation
- adapting the environment

August 2005

Suomen toimintaterapeuttiliitto ry.
Finlands ergoterapeutförbund rf.
(Finnish Association of Occupational Therapists)

Toimintaterapia on toimintaterapeutin toteuttamaa kuntoutusta, jonka avulla ihmistä tuetaan ylläpitämään ja parantamaan toimintakykyä sekä edistämään kehitystään niin, että hän pystyy mahdollisimman omaoimiseen elämässä. Toimintaterapialla tuodaan apua arkeen, niin että ihminen toimintakyvyn rajoituksistaan huolimatta löytää ja hallitsee keinot huolehtia itsestään, olla vuorovaikutuksessa ihmisten kanssa, tehdä työtä tai opiskella, viettää vapaa-aikaa ja leikkiä. Asiakkaan toimintakykyä ja toimintaterapian tarvetta arvioidaan eri toimintamuotojen avulla. Asiakkaan kanssa etsitään sellaisia toimintatapoja, joiden avulla hän pystyy hyödyntämään voimavarojaan ikääntymisestä, vammasta tai sairaudesta huolimatta. Toimintaterapiassa käytetään kuntoutuksen kannalta mielekkäitä toimintoja. Keskeistä on toiminnan soveltaminen asiakkaan tarpeiden ja toimintakyvyn mukaan.

Occupational therapy is rehabilitation by an occupational therapist. The objectives of occupational therapy are to help individuals to maintain and promote their functional ability, to enhance their development and increase their functional independence.

Occupational therapy helps people with limited functional ability to find ways and means to take care of themselves, communicate with others, work or study, and to enjoy leisure and play activities. The client's functional ability and need for occupational therapy is assessed using various forms of activity. The occupational therapist works with the client to find ways and means that will help him or her make best use of their own resources despite old age, a disability, or illness. Activities that are meaningful from the point of self-rehabilitation are used in occupational therapy. Activities are selected to suit the needs and functional ability of the client.

December 2002

Association Nationale Française des Ergothérapeutes (*French Association of Occupational Therapists*)

L'ergothérapie occupe une place spécifique dans le milieu médico-social, particulièrement depuis la création du diplôme d'état en 1970 et du décret d'actes du 21 novembre 1986.

Le but de l'ergothérapie est de favoriser le maintien ou l'accession au maximum d'autonomie des individus en situation de handicap et ceci dans leur environnement.

L'ergothérapeute intervient à plusieurs niveaux:

- il r'adapte l'individu afin d'améliorer les fonctions déficitaires et de favoriser la restructuration globale de la personnalité;
- il réadapte l'individu afin de développer les capacités résiduelles d'adaptation, de compensation, en tenant compte des éléments matériels et humains liés à son milieu de vie habituel;
- il conseille l'individu en difficulté et son entourage, mais aussi les entreprises, les collectivités locales, les différents acteurs de l'environnement et propose des solutions pratiques pour favoriser l'intégration de la personne et un environnement accessible au plus grand nombre.

C'est par son outil thérapeutique spécifique, l'activité, dans ses différentes composantes motrices, sensorielles, psychologiques, socioculturelles, et par la spécificité de son aire d'intervention, le cadre de vie de tous les jours, que l'ergothérapeute est apte à oeuvrer dans une perspective de réadaptation globale.

Detraz M.C. et Coll. – Définition de l'Ergothérapie- in Encyclopédie Méd. Chir. – Editions Techniques, Paris, France – 1992 – 20 pages

November 2002

Deutscher Verband der Ergotherapeuten
(German Association of Occupational Therapists)

Ergotherapie

begleitet, unterstützt und befähigt **Menschen**, die in ihren alltäglichen Fähigkeiten eingeschränkt oder von Einschränkung bedroht sind.

Diesen Menschen soll es ermöglicht werden, für sie **bedeutungsvolle Betätigungen** in den Bereichen **Selbstversorgung, Produktivität** und **Freizeit** in ihrer **Umwelt** durchführen zu können. Ziel der Ergotherapie ist es, Betätigung zu erreichen, und gleichzeitig wird Betätigung als therapeutisches Medium eingesetzt.

Deutscher Verband der Ergotherapeuten 2003

Occupational Therapy accompanies, supports and enables human beings, which are limited in their daily living skills or which are threatened to become limited. It is the goal to provide these individuals with opportunities to perform meaningful occupations in their environment in the areas of self care, productivity and leisure. Occupational functioning is the goal and at the same time occupation is used as the means for therapy.

German Association of Occupational Therapists 2003

April 2005

Iðjuþjálfun á Íslandi
Iðjuþjálfafélag Íslands
(Icelandic Occupational Therapy Association)

Iðjuþjálfun er starfsgrein meðal heilbrigðisgreina. Iðjuþjálfar veita heilbrigðis- og félagsþjónustu v?a í íslensku samfélagi. Þeir beina sjónum sínum að þeirri iðju sem fólk innir af hendi til að annast sig og sína, leggja sitt af mörkum til samfélagsins og njóta þess sem lífið hefur upp á að bj?a. Með aðlögun iðju og umhverfis, þjálfun, fr?slu og r?gjöf stuðla iðjuþjálfar að aukinni færni og virkri þátttöku fólks í iðju, fyrirbyggja vandamál og efla heilsu. Enn fremur taka þeir þátt í stefnumótun í heilbrigðis-, félags-, menntunar- og atvinnumálum til að tryggja að fólk eigi kost á að stunda fjölbreytta iðju sem stuðlar að lífsfyllingu og g?ri heilsu.

Occupational therapy is a health profession. Occupational therapists provide health and social services in a broad context within Icelandic society. The emphasis is on occupation, which includes everything people do to care for themselves and their families, contribute to their communities, play, and enjoy life. Occupational therapists enable performance and participation in people's daily occupations. They prevent occupational problems, and promote health by adapting occupations and the environment, and by providing training, education, and consultation. Furthermore, occupational therapists contribute to health care, social, educational, and vocational policies to promote environments and occupational opportunities necessary for human health and well-being.

November 2002

All India Occupational Therapists Association

‘Occupational Therapy’ means the application of purposeful goal-oriented activity through latest technology with computerized system and the like in the evaluation, diagnosis and or treatment of persons whose function is impaired by physical illness or injury, emotional disorder, congenital or developmental disability, or the aging process, in order to achieve optimum functioning, to prevent disability, and to maintain health. Specific occupational therapy services include but are not limited to, education and training in activities of daily living (ADL): the design fabrication and application of or those (splints): guidance in the selection and use of adaptive equipment, therapeutic activities to enhance functional performances: prevocational evaluation and training and consultation concerning the adaptation of physical environments for the handicapped. These services may be provided to individuals or groups and to both in-patients and out-patients.

The terminology *Ergomedicine* is also in use as synonym to Occupational Therapy in India since the year 1992-1993

Ergomedicine: The Definition

For Academic purpose

Ergomedicine/Occupational Therapy is a health discipline (Branch of medicine) which deals with the therapeutic use of induced energy during the interaction between the man’s work potentials, self energy and the environment in the prevention and treatment of physical and mental illness.

For General purpose

Ergomedicine (Occupational Therapy) is a branch of medicine which is used for the treatment of patients who are physically and/or mentally impaired, disabled or handicapped, temporarily or permanently. It involves the patients in the activities designed to give desired exercise/activity to promote restoration and maximum use of function through interaction of human energy and environment.

July 2005

Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland

Occupational Therapists provide services, within health care, rehabilitation and preventative programmes, to people whose ability to cope with everyday activities is threatened or impaired by physical, psychological or developmental problems.

Occupational Therapists can assess and treat any person, adult or child, who has practical difficulties due to conditions such as: mental illness, arthritis, cerebral palsy, accidental injuries, stroke, learning difficulties or other congenital, developmental, degenerative or neurological conditions.

Occupational Therapy aims to solve practical problems by using selected activities. Its goal is to enable each person to achieve as independent, productive and satisfying a lifestyle as possible. Treatment provides opportunities for the person to explore and master the tasks essential to life roles at home, at work and in leisure.

February 2002

Japanese Association of Occupational Therapists

作業療法とは、身体又は精神に障害のある者、またそれが予測される者に対し、その主体的な生活の獲得を図るため、諸機能の回復、維持及び開発を促す作業活動を用いて、治療、指導及び援助を行うことをいう。

Occupational therapy is to provide treatment, supervision or care to those who have or may have physical and/or mental disabilities, for the purpose of gaining active life, through various occupations which facilitate, restorate or develop various functions.

January 1999

العلاج الوظيفي : علم وفن تقييم ومعالجة الاعاقات الجسدية والنفسية من جميع الفئات العمرية باستخدام نشاطات ووسائل ذات هدف علاجي ، تقاد وتعديل من قبل المعالج الوظيفي بهدف الوصول الى أقصى درجة من الاستقلالية والاعتماد على النفس في جميع مجالات الحياة اليومية .

The art and science of assessment and treatment of the physical and mental handicap through the specific use of selected therapeutic activities guided and adopted by the Occupational Therapist aiming to reach the optimal level of independence in all aspects of daily life.

Kenya Occupational Therapists Association

Occupational Therapy is the art and science of utilizing Occupations in a meaningful way to promote health, well-being and quality of life of people of all ages.

Occupation in this context is taken to mean all those activities that one engages in from the time one wakes up to the time he sleeps. They include activities of daily living (ADL), productive work, play or leisure. The performance of these activities involves the use of specific components of our humanity and an enabling environment.

January 2003

Occupations are all kinds of mental, physical, and social activities that are meaningful to an individual.

작업이란 개인에게 의미가 있는 모든 종류의 정신적, 육체적, 사회적 활동을 말한다.

Occupational therapy is a health profession that uses meaningful and therapeutic activities (occupations) in assisting people with physical, mental or developmental disabilities to promote the quality of life by maximizing independence in activities of daily living and actively participating in social life.

작업치료란 신체적, 정신적, 그리고 발달과정에서 어떠한 이유로 기능이 저하된 사람에게 의미 있는 치료적 활동 (작업)을 통해 최대한 독립적으로 일상생활을 수행하고 능동적으로 사회생활에 참여함으로써 행복한 삶을 영위할 수 있도록 치료, 교육하는 보건의료의 한 전문분야이다.

January 2003

Association Luxembourgeoise des Ergothérapeutes
(Luxembourg Occupational Therapists Association)

L'ergothérapeute est un professionnel de la Santé qui exerce l'art de l'ergothérapie. L'ergothérapie est une méthode de prise en charge des bénéficiaires de soins qui s'applique dans les domaines, de la r?ducation, de la réadaptation, de la prévention et du conseil. Elle s'adresse à des personnes présentant, de façon déclarée ou potentielle, une déficience, un dysfonctionnement, une incapacité ou un handicap de nature somatique, sensorielle, psychique, intellectuelle ou associée créant une désadaptation ou une altération de l'identité.

L'ergothérapeute agit à 2 niveaux :

- **au niveau de la personne** : il cherche à améliorer les fonctions déficitaires, à développer les possibilités restantes et à stimuler les capacités relationnelles. Il vise au maintien ou à l'accession à un maximum d'autonomie individuelle, sociale et professionnelle. L'ergothérapeute réalise les orthèses adéquates ou propose les aides techniques qui s'avèrent nécessaires à l'indépendance de la personne handicapée.
- **au niveau de l'environnement** : l'ergothérapeute propose les solutions pratiques pour modifier l'environnement matériel ou architectural afin de le rendre plus accessible et favoriser une meilleure intégration de la personne handicapée dans son milieu familial, professionnel et social.

December 1999

Persatuan Jurupulih Cara Kerja Malaysia
(Malaysian Occupational Therapists Association)

Pemulihan Cara Kerja ialah rawatan pemulihan melalui aktiviti spesifik keatas pesakit yang menghadapi masalah fizikal, psikologikal, atau sosial, bertujuan membantu mereka mencapai tahap keupayaan yang maksima supaya berdikari di semua aspek kehidupan harian.

Occupational Therapy is rehabilitative treatment through specific activities by patients who have physical, psychological or social problems, aiming to help them achieve their maximum level of abilities in order to be as independent as possible in all aspects of daily living.

September 1994

Malta Association of Occupational Therapists

Occupational Therapy is the assessment and treatment of physical and psychological conditions through selected techniques and purposeful activities aimed at improving the individual's level of functional independence and quality of life.

April 1998

Occupational Therapists Association Mauritius

Occupational Therapy is a health profession which caters for people of all ages who cannot cope with daily life situations because of disability or illness due to physical, psychiatric or social causes. Occupational Therapy aims at bringing to light abilities to counteract difficulties so as to overcome performance deficits at work, at home or during leisure time.

Methods used are through purposeful activities and through counselling. The Occupational Therapist acts as a Mediator between the person with disability and the people surrounding him in the community in which he lives. Hence it is essential for the Occupational Therapist to take into consideration the particular way of living of the individual with disability he is working with.

December 2002

Namibia Association of Occupational Therapists

Occupational Therapy is a health care profession based on the knowledge that purposeful activity can promote health and well-being in all aspects of daily life.

Occupational Therapy aims to prevent dysfunction, to promote, develop, restore and maintain abilities needed to cope with daily activities, to live a satisfying independent healthy life-style and to increase functioning and productivity. Services can be provided individually, in group context or through social systems.

Occupational Therapy provides services to people or groups, whose ability to function in everyday living is disrupted by physical illness or injury, developmental or learning disability/problems, the aging process, mental illness, emotional problems, psycho-social dysfunction, poverty or adverse environmental conditions.

Occupational Therapy services include assessment, treatment, intervention, education and consultation.

Occupational Therapy programs are designed to facilitate maximum use of function to meet demands of the person's working, social, personal and domestic environment. The use of purposeful activity, often adaptive activity, and the active involvement of the person in the therapeutic process is the essential feature of Occupational Therapy.

Occupational Therapists receive education in social, psychological, biological and medical sciences, professional skills and methods. Fieldwork studies form an integral part of the course.

January 2003

Nederlandse Vereniging Voor Ergotherapie
(The Netherlands Occupational Therapists Association)

Ergotherapie biedt de cliënt de mogelijkheden een optimale wijze van uitvoeren van dagelijkse activiteiten te bereiken in de eigen omgeving, waarbij het concrete, voor de cliënt betekenisvolle handelen op de gebieden zelfredzaamheid, arbeid (productiviteit) en vrije tijd onderwerp zijn van therapie.

Occupational therapy offers the client the opportunity to reach an optimal way of performance in daily activities in their own environment; concrete and meaningful occupational behaviour in self-care, productivity and leisure are subjects of therapy.

March 2005

1. Definition of Occupational Therapy

“Occupational therapy is a profession that enables people to lead meaningful and satisfying lives through participation in occupation”.

Definition of Occupational Therapy – New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists (2002)

Supplementary information

2. What is "occupation"?

Occupation is defined as: *“Groups of activities and tasks of everyday life, named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture; occupation is everything people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves (self-care), enjoying life (leisure), and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their community (productivity)”.* (Townsend, E. (Ed). (1997). Enabling Occupation: An occupational therapy perspective. Ottawa: CAOT Publications ACE.

3. How does occupational therapy help?

Occupational therapists help individuals to identify how to engage more fully in the occupations that are meaningful for them.

Examples are as follows:

Self care

1. Showering or bathing
2. Eating or drinking
 - Leisure
 - Driving
3. Sport and exercise
4. Having enough things to do
5. Spending time with friends doing thing you enjoy together

Productivity

1. Preparing meals
2. Use of a computer or workstation
3. Getting things done on time and to the standard you prefer

Occupational therapists may work with individuals of all ages to:

- Help make plans and goals for how they want their future to be
- Help them learn new ways of doing things following illness or injury, for example dressing or cooking
- Adapt the material or equipment used to promote independence, for example recommend wheelchairs, bathboards or toilet seats
- Make changes to the living or working environment to help them undertake their usual occupations
- Develop new skills, abilities or interests, for example to assist in return to work or school
- Access support available in the community
- Develop their confidence in social situations

This list is not exhaustive.

Occupational therapy services may be focussed on prevention of detrimental health status, rehabilitation after changed health status or maintenance of current health status.

Ratified by Council 2/3 November 2002

Nigerian Association of Occupational Therapists

Occupational therapy is the means by which people of all age groups with health conditions can be involved in the art of living a productive and meaningful life. People are assisted to realize the qualities they possess and to build on these for sustained existence. Doing this provides the avenue for opportunities to perform activities identified with self-care, work / play and free time. Occupational therapy works with the individual towards promoting freedom from dependence on others and to attract respect and not pity.

Occupational therapy demonstrates that:

1. It is every individual's right to participate in life activities associated with the age group whatever the condition.
2. Obstacles within or outside the person preventing function can be addressed.
3. Each individual can be assisted to be aware of his own potential and to be motivated.
4. Tapping on this knowledge promotes health, encourages performance and contributes quality to life.

March 2005

Norsk Ergoterapeutforbund
(Norwegian Occupational Therapists Association)

Ergoterapeuter fremmer helse gjennom aktivitet. Målet er mestring av ønskede og nødvendige aktiviteter, deltakelse, tilhørighet og tilfredshet i hjem, skole, arbeid og fritid. Ergoterapeuten anvender aktiviteter direkte i behandling og opptrening, og indirekte ved å tilrettelegge for gjøremål gjennom tilpasning av omgivelser og bruk av tekniske hjelpemidler.

November 2002

Associação Portuguesa de Terapia Ocupacional
(Portuguese Association of Occupational Therapists)

Avaliação tratamento e habilitação de indivíduos com disfunção física, mental, de desenvolvimento, social ou outras, utilizando técnicas terapêuticas integradas em actividades seleccionadas consoante o objectivo pretendido e enquadradas na relação terapeuta/utente; prevenção da incapacidade, através de estratégias adequadas com vista a proporcionar ao indivíduo o máximo de desempenho e autonomia nas suas funções pessoais, sociais e profissionais, e, se necessário, o estudo e desenvolvimento das respectivas ajudas técnicas, em ordem a contribuir para uma melhoria da qualidade de vida.

Assessment, treatment and enablement of people with physical, mental, developmental, social or other dysfunctions, using therapeutic techniques together with activities selected according to the adequate aim and supported by the relation therapist/client; prevention of the disability, throughout and autonomy in his personal, social and professional functions and, if necessary, the study and development of technical aids in order to contribute to a better quality of life.

April 2005

Singapore Association of Occupational Therapists

Occupational Therapy is a health discipline which is concerned with people of all ages whose everyday life has been affected by physical and/or mental health problems.

It uses meaningful activities and variety of treatment methods to obtain a desired level of functioning in work, self-care, play and familial roles within the person's cultural environment.

Services provided may include consultation, education, health promotion, direct intervention, home and work adaptation, prescription of assistive devices and family or caregivers support within the health and social system.

November 2002

Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa (OTASA)

Occupational Therapy uses the client's active engagement in meaningful, purposeful and socio-culturally approved activities to remediate occupational dysfunction precipitated by illness, injury, developmental delay, lack of environmental resources and opportunity.

In the Southern African context occupational dysfunction may result from mental, psychological and physical illness, developmental problems, natural disasters, lack of educational and job opportunities, stressful living and the pressure of change; social and political disorganisation, inadequate resources and poverty. Occupational dysfunction occurs in all walks of society, in all age and cultural groupings.

The Occupational Therapist, using the art and science of Occupational Therapy, works intersectorially, using the principles of the primary health care approach to negotiate and provide appropriate services, of a acceptable standard to individuals, groups and communities, that are accessible, appropriate and at a cost the community can afford, taking note of communities expressed needs.

Occupational therapy aims to empower occupationally dysfunctional clients to carry out their everyday personal management, work/productive and recreational activities at their highest level of independence, demonstrating dignity and self respect to facilitate a better quality of life, improved health, illness management, skill development, recovery and a health life Style. Therapeutic relationships with clients and their caregivers are characterised by caring that enables the client to be a proactive and an informed partner in their treatment. Up to date management and appropriate technologies should be used to ensure effective, cost effective and efficient treatment, within the prescribed ethical and legal boundaries of the profession as described by the SA Health Professions Council and the Health Service.

The Occupational Therapist does not work in isolation but in a multidisciplinary team. The Occupational Therapist, together with other role players, provides a comprehensive service that should include health promotion, prevention of occupational dysfunction and illness, therapeutic and rehabilitative services at all levels of care within the health (both public and private), education and welfare sectors from academic hospitals to community clinics and client's homes in both rural and urban settings. Management of district rehabilitation services is not the responsibility of senior staff but the responsibility of junior staff who are accountable.

The Occupational Therapist is also responsible for her own ongoing learning so that her knowledge is current. Basic and applied research must be undertaken to critically evaluate and validate the effectiveness of treatment methods and use of resources for individuals, groups and communities. Research also needs to develop technologies and methods that are appropriate to our unique environment, needs, cultural diversity epidemiological characteristics and lifestyle and which unequivocally positions occupational therapy as a unique, effective and valued service provider.

November 2002

Asociacion Profesional Espanola de Terapia Ocupacional
(Spanish Occupational Therapists Association)

“La Terapia Ocupacional es la disciplina sociosanitaria que evalúa la capacidad de la persona para desempeñar las actividades de la vida cotidiana e interviene cuando dicha capacidad está en riesgo o dañada por cualquier causa .

El Terapeuta Ocupacional utiliza ,con finalidad terapéutica , la actividad y el entorno para la prevención y tratamiento de las deficiencias , discapacidades y minusvalias , con el objetivo de conseguir y/o mantener el máximo nivel de salud, autonomía personal e integración en el entorno de la persona y/o grupos de trabajo.”

Occupational Therapy is the Health and Social discipline that assess the person’s ability to perform the occupational activities and intervenes when said ability is at risk or deteriorated by any means.

The Occupational Therapist makes use of the occupational activity and the environment with a therapeutic aim to prevent and treat impairments, disabilities and handicaps, having as a final objective to achieve and /or maintain the maximum level of health, independence and integration of the individual and/or groups at risk.

April 1999

Förbundet Sveriges Arbetsterapeuter
(Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists)

Arbetsterapiämnet omfattar det mänskliga görandet så som det uttrycks i socialt och kulturellt definierade aktiviteter. Arbetsterapiämnet är kunskapen och vetenskapen om hur resurser i individen, omgivningen och aktiviteter interagerar och stimulerar till delaktighet i livssituationen. Kunskapen och vetenskapen innefattar även förebyggande och terapeutisk tillämpning med syfte att stimulera till välbefinnande i det dagliga livet.

(Fastställt av FSAs Förbundsstyrelse i maj 2002)

The subject of occupational therapy concerns the doings of humans as they are expressed in the context of socially and culturally defined activities. The subject of occupational therapy is the knowledge and science of how resources in the individual, the environment, and activities interact and promote participation in life situations. The knowledge and science also includes applying preventive and therapeutic measures with the aim of promoting daily life satisfaction.

*As laid down by the board of the Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists in
May 2002*

March 2005

ErgotherapeutInnen-Verband Schweiz
(Swiss Association of Occupational Therapists)

Ergotherapie - abgeleitet vom griechischen „ergein“ (tun, arbeiten, handeln) - ist eine ganzheitlich ausgerichtete medizinische Behandlung, die psychologische, pädagogische und soziale Aspekte einbezieht.

Ergotherapie geht davon aus, dass Tätigkeit ein menschliches Grundbedürfnis ist, und dass gezielt eingesetzte Tätigkeit eine therapeutische Wirkung hat.

Die sorgfältige Erfassung des Menschen in seiner gesamten Lebenssituation ist Voraussetzung für therapeutisches Planen und Behandeln mittels ausgewählter Tätigkeiten. Das Auswerten des Behandlungsverlaufes garantiert ein individuelles, dem Genesungsprozess angepasstes Behandlungsprogramm.

Ärztlich verordnete Ergotherapie wird von den Sozialversicherungen und Krankenkassen vergütet.

L'ergothérapie est un traitement spécifique, basé sur des principes médico-psycho-pédagogiques; l'étymologie de ce terme vient du grec „ergein“: faire, travailler, agir.

L'ergothérapie part du principe qu'agir est un besoin fondamental de l'homme et que l'action possède des effets thérapeutiques.

La planification et l'exécution des activités finalisées, ne sont réalisables que grâce à une compréhension globale de l'individu.

Une évaluation continue du déroulement du traitement, permet à l'ergothérapeute d'adapter les activités finalisées aux exigences et aux progrès du patient.

Le traitement ergothérapeutique est pris en charge par les assurances sociales et les caisses maladies, à condition qu'il soit prescrit par un médecin.

L'ergoterapia - il nome deriva dal greco "ergein" (fare, lavorare, agire) - è un trattamento specifico, fondato su principi medici, psicologici e pedagogici.

L'ergoterapia presuppone che l'agire è un bisogno umano fondamentale: ciò presenta effetti terapeutici.

La considerazione accurata dell'individuo in tutta la sua globalità, è la premessa per un programma terapeutico personalizzato, basato sullo svolgimento di attività finalizzate. Una costante valutazione della terapia, ne garantisce l'adattamento alle esigenze e ai progressi del paziente. Le assicurazioni sociali e le Casse Malattia provvedono ai costi dell'ergoterapia, dietro prescrizione del Medico Curante.

January 2003

職能治療的定義

職能治療是透過幫助個案選擇、安排與執行日常的職能活動，進而提昇其生活品質。職能治療的對象包括因生理、心理及社會功能障礙、發展遲緩、學習障礙、老化或社會文化環境不利等因素而導致執行個人的活動或參與社會的能力受限者。職能治療專業人員應用職能科學與理論及活動分析，來瞭解影響個案職能表現的原因；針對個案的生理、心理及社會功能予以訓練、提昇，同時並運用環境改造、副木及輔助用具、工作簡化、以及工作強化等方法，來幫助個案能夠執行有意義的日常活動，以維持其身心功能，並預防功能之退化，讓每個人都能夠過著有品質的生活。

Occupational therapy is aimed at improving an individual's quality of life by assisting him/her to choose, arrange and carry out daily activities. Individuals who may benefit from occupational therapy include those whose daily function and social participation are limited by physical and/or psychosocial dysfunction, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, aging, or inadequate socio-cultural environment. Occupational therapy professionals apply principles of occupational science and of activity analysis to determine factors influencing the individual's occupational performance, and approach these factors from a bio-psycho-social perspective. In addition, occupational therapists often use methods of environmental adaptation, splinting, assistive devices, work simplification and work hardening to help the individual engage in meaningful daily activities, maintain his/her sense of well-being and prevent regression in function to ensure one's satisfaction of life.

March 2005

Occupational Therapists Association of Thailand

Occupational Therapy is one professional, who provide physical, mental and social rehabilitation service to the patients. We use all purposeful activity that fill a person(s) waking hour as the media in order to maintain and improve their functions for being able to perform activity of daily livings and to be independently living in community.

February 2002

Uganda Association Of Occupational Therapists (UAOT)

Okujjanjaba nga weyambisa emirimo egya bulijjo, lyettabi ly'obulamu, ery'obuvunanyizibwa, eri abantu abalema, nabo abatategeera bulungi mu bwongo era ne bakateyamba. Obuleema buyinza okuba nga bwa kiseera oba nga bwalubeereera.

Munzijanjaba eno, omukugu ayigiriza abantu bano okwenyigira mu mirimu egitekeddwa okuba sobozesa okukozesa ebitundu byabwe eby'omubiri mu bujjuvu, nge'ekigendererwa, basobole okutukiriza ebyetaago byabwe mukukola, okukolagana nabalala awamu n'okwetaba mubulamu obujjuvu.

A method of treatment where functional activity is the focus to help people with physical, mental, and social problems to be as independent as possible in activities of daily living. The aim of Occupational Therapy is to improve independence, to prevent or reduce disability and to maintain health.

November 2002

British Association of Occupational Therapists
(United Kingdom)

DEFINITION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
ADOPTED BY COUNCIL AT
COT2 2003-04 14TH JANUARY 2004

‘Occupational Therapy enables people to achieve health, well being and life satisfaction through participation in occupation.’

DEFINITION OF OCCUPATION

Occupation: daily activities that reflect cultural values, provide structure to living and meaning to individuals; these activities meet human needs for self care, enjoyment and participation in society.

Willard & Spackman 10th Edition 2003

For a more detailed (75 page) definition, *Occupational therapy defined as a complex intervention* by Jennifer Creek is available from the COT website <http://www.cot.org.uk/public/publications/list/theory/intro/intro.php>

March 2005

American Occupational Therapy Association

(United States of America)

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.

Adopted by the American Occupational Therapy Association Representative Assembly 5/21/04.

May 2005

Federacion Venezolana de Terapeutas Ocupacionales

No national definition of occupational therapy. Some occupational therapists use the American definition and others use the translation of the WFOT definition.

January 2003