



Importance of Occupational Therapy for Dementia

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DESCRIPTION

Occupational therapy is the use of assessments and interventions to help someone with their daily tasks. It is often used for rehabilitation after injury. Practitioners called as occupational therapists, assess a person's needs and potential risks, recommend and support ways to live a safer, more fulfilling life. Occupational therapy can improve daily functioning, social participation and well-being in people with dementia. It has also been shown to improve primary caregiver performance and well-being. Old aged people with dementia often experience symptoms such as forgetfulness, feeling lost, difficulty planning, poor personal hygiene, and difficulty moving around. Occupational therapists work with old aged people with dementia to identify problems with their independent functioning and daily activities. They recommend the ways to adapt the environment to support old age people with dementia, such as adding dementia-friendly clocks and labelling doors. It's like training to improve motor skills and mobility, reasoning to tackle everyday tasks, or communication skills to push boundaries. In addition to practical advice such as recommendations for special seating and other mobility aids, work with the patient's family to provide routine advice and techniques for managing care. It also ensures caregiver well-being by providing emotional support, coping strategies, and information about available social and networks.

The Occupational Therapy Practice lists the following as typical ways in which an occupational therapist will support someone with dementia and their loved ones. Occupational therapy can be an important source of support for patients with dementia and their families. The role of an occupational therapist is to work with clients to maximize their level of independence in their day-to-day activities. The assessment of client's daily life to identify goals, routine activities that they wish to maintain. Dementia is different for each person diagnosed and their role is to provide patients and their families with the tools needed to preserve their memory and function for as long as possible. An occupational therapist will work with a client with Dementia to identify the areas they are struggling with and help them. They provide practical advice and techniques directly to the client as well as their family members.

Some examples of how an occupational therapist may help a patient with dementia are giving advice on new techniques to continue or to complete every day activities such as dressing and meal preparation as the condition advances. Support with sourcing the right equipment to help with difficulties as they arise. This will include considering adaptations such as wet rooms or stair lifts. Fatigue management, as extreme tiredness is a common problem with Dementia. Reminiscence work to help manage long term memory loss. Occupational Therapy (OT) interventions for people with dementia will vary based on the stage of their diagnosis. So, someone in the early stages of dementia will receive different interventions than someone with severe dementia.

To determine the type of intervention is right for that person, they will undergo a series of occupational therapy dementia assessments. From there, therapist will come up with a personalised plan to help regain a person's independence in everyday life. In the early stages of dementia, a person may find that the person can able to function at work and in normal activities. However, it will still be incredibly helpful to incorporate Occupational Therapy as soon as a person notices the signs of dementia creeping in. Even if a person simply notices misplacing door keys, forgetting to take medication, or missed another appointment, OT can help. In the early stages of dementia, Occupational Therapist might incorporate interventions like memory aids such as calendars, checklists, reminders, alarms, or a curated routine. Caretakers will also be involved so that everyone is on the same page about that patient's goal.

Unfortunately, in the later stages of dementia, the patient completely lack sense of space and time and they are not able to do anything, makes them almost completely dependent on their caregivers, so occupational therapy at this stage focuses more on the caregiver than on the patient. Late-stage dementia interventions include training caregivers on patient mobility, patient home exercise programs, and other techniques to improve the patient's lifestyle. However, occupational therapist interventions at this stage may also include support for caregivers who are often depressed, exhausted, and under extreme stress.

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