



Occupational Therapy & Behavioral Health Workforce

**CCBH Workforce Panel – 6.26.2024
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Occupation

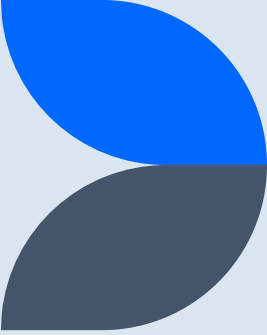
“Man, through the use of his hands, as they are energized by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health.”



What do we mean by occupation?

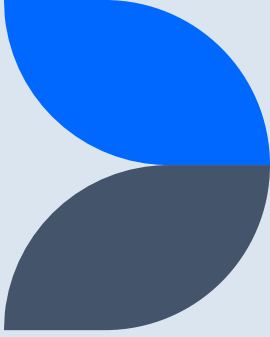
- Draws on 19th century framing of ‘occupation’ as activities that ‘occupy’ our time and have meaning (Meyer, 1921/1983)
- “the proper use of time in some helpful and gratifying activity”
- “A pleasure in achievement, a real pleasure in the use and activity of one's hands and muscles and a happy appreciation of time”
- “The larger rhythms of night and day, of sleep and waking hours, of hunger and its gratification, and finally the big four-work and play and rest and sleep, which our organism must be able to balance even under difficulty”

Occupational Therapy – Our Roots



- Modern profession of occupational therapy grew out of use of 'occupation' in asylum practices of the mid-1800's and early 1900's
 - Including introduction of use of occupation to reduce use of seclusion and restraint
- National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy founded in 1917, including William Rush Dunton, Jr. who was professor at Johns Hopkins, Sheppard and Pratt, and was a founder of the Maryland Psychiatric Society

Occupational Therapy – Contemporary Definition



- Therapeutic use of everyday life activities (occupations) for the purpose of enhancing or enabling participation in roles, habits, and routines in home, school, workplace, community, and other settings.
- Use their knowledge of the transactional relationship among the person, occupations and contexts/environments to facilitate change or growth.
- Concerned with the end result of participation and thus enable engagement through adaptations and modifications to the environment or objects within the environment when needed.

Occupational Therapy Education

OT:

- Entry-level Master's, that includes 6 months of full time practicum/fieldwork requirements
- National certification exam
- State licensure, where what OTs can do is defined by state practice acts

OTA:

- Associate's degree, that includes 4 months of practicum/fieldwork requirements
- National certification exam
- In some states licensed
- Must work under supervision of OTR/L





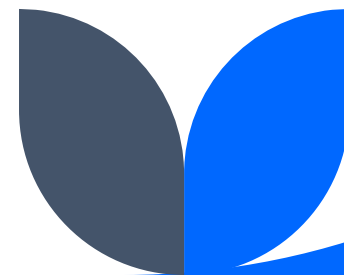
OT Education – Mental Health

- Every Occupational Therapy curriculum and fieldwork placement includes mental health, and OTs use therapeutic interventions in a variety of community settings in the areas of work, education, skills training, health and wellness, and cognitive remediation and adaptation.
- In the State of California, OTs are licensed by the California Board of Occupational Therapy, and as a result are independent and autonomous providers.



Occupational Therapists – LMHP/LPHA

Occupational Therapists (OTs) are recognized as licensed mental health professionals (LMHP) in California's Specialty Mental Health (SMH) Medi-Cal Services and as a Licensed Practitioner of the Healing Arts (LPHA) in the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS).



OT in Behavioral Health Practice Context

Population Targets:

- Individuals who are profoundly disengaged from everyday activities beyond ADL's
- Individuals who are experiencing significant difficulty in 'functioning' around self-care (hygiene) and/or home care routines (e.g. hoarding)
- Individuals experiencing difficulty managing co-morbid chronic medical conditions that require ongoing self-care practices

Interventions:

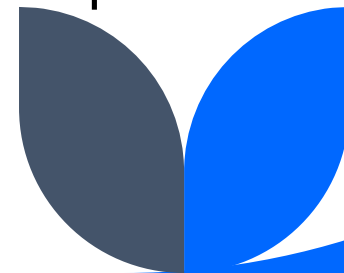
- Activity adaptations and environment modifications to minimize impact of neurocognitive deficits and/or sensory processing difficulties on daily functioning
- Eliciting activity engagement utilizing complex understanding of inertia and boredom often experienced by persons labeled with serious mental illness
- Person, activity/occupation and contextual factors taken together

Occupational Therapy – Behavioral Health Workforce Opportunities

Qualified to serve in the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System and can support the DMC-ODS expansion by serving as LPHAs given training to provide services in community settings to support individuals with behavioral health conditions in recovery and address the challenges of daily living

OTs may support the current behavioral health workforce with CalAIM efforts as well as other statewide behavioral health initiatives such as:

- Governor’s Master Plan for Kids
- Master Plan for Aging
- Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative
- These initiatives and programs require a robust and diverse workforce in order to successfully serve populations in need, and Occupational Therapists are qualified to support these efforts.



Increasing Occupational Therapists in the Behavioral Health Workforce

- Educating local behavioral health agencies about value of adding OTs to teams
- Loan forgiveness needed
- Scholarships
- Stipends for level II fieldwork and/or capstone experiences



Contact Information

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