

Occupational Therapy in Long-Term Care

What Occupational Therapists can offer the residents and staff in LTC Homes
OTs enhance quality of life through enabling participation in meaningful, everyday activities!

ADL Assessments & Restorative Care

- OTs assess residents' performance of their everyday tasks such as eating, grooming, dressing, bathing, and toileting. OTs can then develop individualized, resident-centred programs that may include positioning, set-up by staff, adaptive equipment, and cueing. The goal is to promote a resident's ability to function to their full potential thereby increasing their independence and self-esteem. In this way, OTs are valuable members of the restorative care team.

Eating, Feeding & Swallowing

- OTs assess and make recommendations based on a resident's feeding needs to increase independence in feeding or to increase swallowing safety and decrease risk of aspiration. Interventions may include proper mealtime positioning, adaptive feeding equipment, cueing or set-up by staff.

Adaptive Equipment

- OTs assess residents' needs for adaptive equipment, as well as provide education on proper use. These devices may include mobility aids such as wheelchairs and walkers, as well as other equipment such as transfer poles, raised toilet seats, grab bars, reachers, dressing sticks, sock aids, or long-handled shoe horns.

Splinting

- OTs assess for and fabricate splints or recommend pre-fabricated orthotics to maximize and maintain function and range of motion as well as prevent contractures, pain, and further functional decline.

Dementia Care

- OTs use formal and informal cognitive assessments for residents with early onset dementia to monitor changes and ensure their safety and well-being. OTs also address falls prevention strategies and behavioral issues associated with dementia, such as agitation and aggression. Specialized resident programs are developed to provide meaningful activities that maintain cognitive function and reduce disruptive behaviors.

Behavioural Support

- OTs assess the causes of behavioural concerns that can pose an obstacle to care and interfere with a resident's quality of life. OTs can then provide recommendations that will enhance the emotional and psycho-social well-being of residents, enable participation in everyday activities and routines, and decrease caregiver burnout.



Ontario Society of
Occupational Therapists

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Mobility & Seating

- OTs assess residents to determine the need for and proper prescription of mobility and seating equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, walkers). OTs determine the correct type and size of chair and appropriate accessories in order to promote resident safety, mobility, participation, and comfort. OTs also re-assess the mobility and seating equipment of residents as changes in their physical and cognitive abilities occur to ensure that equipment continues to meet their needs.

Restraint Reduction

- OTs recommend alternative equipment, techniques, and positioning that reduce or eliminate the need for restraints. OTs also provide strategies for residents who have behavioral issues and who otherwise may have been restrained.

Falls Prevention

- OTs are part of the multidisciplinary team focused on reducing residents' risk of falls. OTs assess resident status and behavioral change and provide interventions such as changes to the living environment (e.g. rearranging bedroom furniture), providing assistive equipment (e.g. grab bars, transfer poles) or addressing their fear of falling.

Pressure Wound Prevention & Management

- OTs make recommendations for residents with existing pressure wounds or those who are at increased risk of developing them. Recommendations may include re-positioning schedules, bed positioning, special seating and bedding surfaces or strategies to prevent contractures from becoming more severe.

Resident & Family Education

- OTs educate residents and their family members about skills important for resident safety, participation, dignity, and independence. This may include instruction on proper transfer techniques, positioning, use of a resident's specific mobility or other adaptive equipment or compensatory strategies.

Staff In-Service Training

- OTs can provide a wide range of educational programs to health care staff on topics such as safe transfer techniques, proper usage of adaptive equipment, proper resident positioning techniques or communication strategies for residents with cognitive or sensory impairments.

Connect with Community Resources

- OTs assess a resident's needs and can support access to community services they would benefit from. These may include services for therapeutic footwear, augmentative communication devices, accessible transportation, compression garments or funding.

References

- <http://www.completerehabolutions.com/blog/occupational-therapists-in-nursing-homes-part/>
- <http://www.concernedfriends.ca/iOT.htm>
- <http://www.aota.org/Practitioners/Advocacy/Federal/Testimony/2007/40386.aspx?FT=.pdf>