Roles and Responsibilities of Healthcare Professionals

**Occupational Therapist**

**Roles**

Occupational therapists provide services to persons whose ability to perform daily tasks is threatened or impaired by developmental deficits, the aging process, environmental deprivation, sensory impairment, physical injury or illness, and/or psychological or social dysfunction. Occupational therapists work in a variety of settings which include but are not limited to: hospitals, outpatient clinics, skilled nursing facilities, long term care facilities, early intervention, schools, home health, and community programs.

**Responsibilities**

- Screen and evaluate persons whose ability to perform or participate in daily tasks is threatened or impaired
- Use information from observations, assessments, interviews, and history to determine factors influencing functional performance and need for occupational therapy services
- Establish an individualized intervention plan that includes specific goals and intervention methods (i.e., therapeutic activities, exercises, education, etc.) to maximize functional performance and participation in daily tasks
- Provide compensatory, remedial, developmental, and/or preventative interventions to improve person’s participation in daily activities, for example:
  - Teach a person with a brain injury strategies to compensate for memory and processing difficulties
  - Educate caregivers about how to minimize overstimulation and confusion in persons with dementia
  - Improve motor control necessary for self-care tasks for person with hemiplegia following a stroke
  - Facilitate developmental play skills for child with autism.
• Identify specific tasks that aggravate pain and suggest alternatives for person with arthritis
• Adapt environment to promote optimal functioning and prevent injury in the workplace
• Recommend special equipment (e.g., wheelchair) to increase independence for child with cerebral palsy
• Provide training on use of assistive devices to complete daily activities for person with spinal cord injury
• Simplify tasks to conserve energy for persons with degenerative conditions
• Improve social skills for person with severe and persistent mental illness
• Document services provided, monitor person’s response to interventions, and report outcomes to patients/clients, physicians, other healthcare providers, and payers