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An Introduction to Occupational Therapy

Brockenhurst College

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Royal College of Occupational Therapists

hcpc registered

Overview

- What is Occupational Therapy?
- What do Occupational Therapists do?
- How to become an Occupational Therapist
- Beki’s career journey
- Career opportunities
- Current challenges and future trends
- How Occupational Therapy makes a difference
- Summary
- Questions?
- Resources/links

What is Occupational Therapy?

- Occupational Therapists helps people to live their best life at home, at work and everywhere else
- It's about being able to do the things you need, want and have to do 'occupations' (self-care; leisure; productivity – meaningful & purposeful)

'As an Occupational Therapist, you'll use your creativity and problem-solving skills to support people who find some areas of life difficult. That means talking to them to understand their needs, seeing challenges through their eyes, and helping them to overcome these challenges. It makes Occupational Therapy an incredibly rewarding profession. It doesn't get much better than knowing you've helped someone to live their life to the fullest' (RCOT 2025)



What is Occupational Therapy?

- Science-based, health and social care profession that's regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) | The HCPC and brings together many different skills
- Encompasses areas like anatomy and physiology, psychology, sociology, pathology, learning disabilities and mental health. You'll look at how different health conditions, environmental factors, activities and life events can impact upon people's sense of self, their relationships and their careers. And then you'll work with each individual to find the best way forward
- Started in the early 20th century influenced by creative movements. Grew stronger after World War II when many people needed support
- Our professional body is the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) Royal College of Occupational Therapists - Home

What do Occupational Therapists do?

- Help people of all ages to do the things they need or want to do. Understand the person's needs and wishes, identify barriers and develop strategies to overcome these
- **Assessments:** Understand what challenges people face in their daily lives and form tailored intervention plans with them
- **Interventions:** Create realistic, practical solutions to help people to improve/regain their every day skills to engage in their occupations of choice
- Help people to move if they can't move themselves (e.g., rehabilitation, post surgery)



What do Occupational Therapists do?

- Multi-disciplinary team working – with the individual, other health professionals, families, carers
- Assess for and prescribe assistive aids and equipment
- Work in mental and physical health settings, including with the community
- Evidence-based practice - supported by clinical guidelines (National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence/NICE), Health Professional Standards of Practice/Code of Ethics, theories and models of practice, research and development



How to become an Occupational Therapist

- Typically a three or four year undergraduate course – BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Next steps - Royal College of Occupational Therapists
- Apprenticeship Route
- Mix of academic study with practice-based learning experiences (placements)
- Experiential learning allows you to work on real-life scenarios to gain an understanding of occupational roles and how health and wellbeing can affect their functioning

Key subjects include:

- Human anatomy, health sciences, psychology, mental and physical health and practical Occupational Therapy assessment and intervention techniques

Entry requirements: (e.g., BU: 120 – 136 UCAS tariff points including a minimum of two A-levels or equivalent. BTEC Extended Diploma Grade DDM (128 UCAS tariff points). Foundation Year: 48 – 72 tariff points

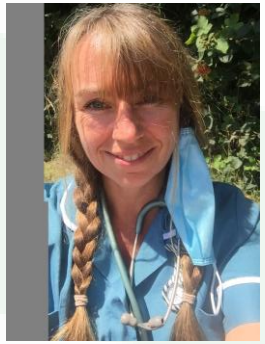
Beki’s career journey













Career opportunities



- Working with the NHS or social care
- Private Practice
- Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) - need Masters in ACP
- Consultant Occupational Therapist
- Specialising in areas such as mental health, physical health, paediatrics
- Roles in research and education (Lecturer, Researcher)
- Leadership roles (e.g., Talent Management, Team/Service Lead, Clinical Lead)

The skills you learn in Occupational Therapy can help you work in many different environments, all while making a real difference to people's lives [Home - Royal College of Occupational Therapists]

Current challenges and future trends

Current challenges:

- Limited resources/talent and staffing pressures in health and social care
- The need to stay up-to-date with fast changing evidence-base and technologies
- Prescribing of medicines – Advanced Clinical Practice
- Blurring of role boundaries
- Talent pipelines – workforce

Looking ahead:

- Innovations like telehealth and new technologies in rehabilitation/AI
- More focus on mental health and community wellness
- Self – management of wellbeing and conditions
- Health and social care working more closely together – Integrated Care Systems

How Occupational Therapy makes a difference

Impact on lives:

- Helping individuals to gain/regain independence and confidence
- Improving quality of life for many people

Wider benefits:

- Reducing pressure on health and care services
- Building stronger, more supportive communities
- Empowering people to lead the life they want to live, despite barriers and challenges to engaging in their daily occupations



Summary

Occupational Therapy is all about:

- Helping people to do the things they want and need to do ‘occupations’
- Promoting independence (if this is what is important to the person) and quality of life
- Reablement and recovery, analysing occupations/tasks
- Finding solutions to help people to live their lives the way they want to, despite illness or injury/barriers

Consider how your interests in science, art or helping others could fit into a career in Occupational Therapy



Questions?

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Occupational Therapy services

Resources/links

- Royal College of Occupational Therapists – Home
- The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) | The HCPC
- Find guidance | NICE
- NHS England » Allied Health Professions
- Centre for Advancing Practice Portal - Advanced Practice
- History Of Occupational Therapy Timeline | Preceden

Occupational Therapy Services