

The role of the OT in treating people with physical disabilities

The role of the OT:

- Assessment of patient's background and remaining basic abilities.
- Information regarding pathology
- Strengthening of muscles through activity participation
- Provision of splints and pressure garments.
- Improve muscle strength
- Improve range of motion
- Improve fine motor coordination
- Improve grasps and grip strength
- Sensory retraining
- Mobility retraining
- Normalize tone
- Facilitate better positioning
- Cognitive retraining
- Home programmes for positioning and handling of patient
- Improve independence in daily tasks
- Adaptations of tasks for independent performance
- Prevent contractures
- Work assessment and adaptation
- Prevention of painful shoulder
- Bed mobility
- Transfers
- Wheelchair mobility and training

Need Support / Information?

Please feel free to contact the hospital or the occupational therapists.

National District Hospital

Roth Street

Willows

Bloemfontein

051 403 9600

Occupational Therapy

Tel: 051 403 9678



Occupational Therapy
For Physical disabilities



health

Department of
Health
FREE STATE PROVINCE

www.fs.gov.za

Physical Disabilities addressed by the OT:

Neurological

Signs and symptoms:

- Abnormal tone: flaccidity (low tone) or spasticity (high tone)
- Poor co-ordination
- Apraxia
- Movement problems such as poor balance, inability to walk
- contractures
- Possible sensory and speech problems
- Cognitive impairment
- Problems with activities of daily living

Head injuries

Signs and symptoms

- Possible paralysis
- Incoordination
- Poor balance
- Perceptual problems such as neglect of certain parts of the body, difficulty following instructions and ,disorientation
- Speech problems
- Poor sensation

Cerebro Vascular Accident (Stroke)

Signs and symptoms

- Motor- paralysis or weakness of one side of the body, poor balance and flaccidity or spasticity
- Perceptual- ignore affected side, aphasia, disorientation, difficulty following instructions
- Speech problems
- poor sensation on affected sided

Spinal injuries

Signs and symptoms

- Loss of movement of function
- Loss of sensation
- Unable to control toileting
- Depression as a result of the disability

Hand Injuries

Signs and symptoms

- Loss of function
- Poor sensation
- Deformity of hand
- Pain and swelling

Assistive Devices

Assistive devices are designed for individual needs to assist patient in performing daily activities that are limited due to pathology.

Wheelchairs

Patients are evaluated with regards to their age, pathology and remaining abilities to determine whether a wheelchair is necessary. If a wheelchair should be issued then the patient's width and length is measured, to determine which wheelchair will best suit him or her.

The wheelchair is ordered and the patient's name is put on a waiting list.

When a patient receives a wheelchair, the Occupational Therapist does wheelchair training to ensure the patient is mobile in the wheelchair as well as knowledge of the use and maintenance of the wheelchair.

Home Programmes

OT Role: Appropriate Design

Home programmes are provided by the OT, and form an essential part of the treatment of patients with physical disabilities. These include activities for the carers and family members to do at home. Home programmes are individually designed and aimed at reducing specific problems

