

Occupational Therapy Groups in an Acute Psychiatric Setting

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MANAGED BY UK HEALTHCARE

BACKGROUND

Serious mental illness (SMI) can impact an individual's ability to perform activities of daily living (ADLs), which include self-care and hygiene, as well as instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), which include home management, health management, money management, etc. (Rocamora-Montenegro et al., 2021). When a person's ability to perform their ADLs and/or IADLs are impacted, they face challenges to safely and effectively navigating the community. Occupational therapy staff have the clinical skills to address consumer deficits with ADLs and IADLs in a group setting.

PRACTICE INITIATIVE

Occupational therapy (OT) is client-centered treatment that uses everyday occupations to increase an individual's independence within the community. At Eastern State Hospital, occupational therapy staff provide evidence-based group treatment to provide our consumers with the skills necessary to be successful upon discharge. OT groups currently offered off-unit within the Recovery Mall include the following: Community Mobility, Meal Planning/Grocery Shopping/ Meal Preparation, Snack Club, Health Management, Self-Regulation, Money Management, Self-Advocacy, and Medication Management. OT groups are added, revised, and removed dependent upon the needs of consumers.

METHODS & MATERIALS

Meal Planning/Grocery Shopping/ Meal Preparation

- Focus: sequence clients through the steps to create healthy, affordable meals with a focus on safety.
- These are a series of related groups in which consumers plan a meal, buy ingredients at the grocery store, then prepare and cook the meal in the kitchen.
- Treatment methods: Learning how to navigate the grocery store and find affordable food options in the real-life environment. Client's also get hands on experience in an actual kitchen, increasing safety awareness and learning how to prepare a meal.

Money Management

- Focus: addresses skills such as budgeting, fraud prevention, and check writing in order to mitigate financial hardships.
- These skills are needed to be able to successfully manage finances upon discharge from the hospital
- Treatment methods: group discussion, videos, hands-on activities, money management related games, and handouts.

Snack Club

- Focus: develops basic meal preparation skills and encourages healthy social interactions.
- A group of consumers prepare a snack that can be completed within 45 minutes. Tasks are divided between participants.
- Treatment methods: Education on safely preparing simple snacks is provided. Appropriate hygiene within the kitchen as well as social skills related to dining etiquette are addressed.

Health Management

- Focus: health and wellness routines such as sleep hygiene, helping clients develop and manage oral hygiene, nutrition, and stress management. Clients are also educated on management of chronic healthcare conditions and importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- Client's increase their independence with managing their own health and improving their over-all wellbeing.
- Treatment methods: Group discussions, educational handouts, and videos

Self-Regulation

- Focus: assists clients with identifying sensory input that helps them manage emotions.
- Provide group content from the trauma informed, evidence-based "Sensory Connection Program" by Karen Moore, OTR/L.
- Increases client's quality of life and provides them with knowledge on coping skills that will assist with decreasing hospital admissions.
- Treatment methods: group discussion, hand-outs, and hands-on activities.

Medication Education

- Co-lead with Pharmacy Staff
- Focus: addresses the functional components of medication management such as utilizing a pill organizer and understanding how to read a prescription label, as well as strategies to utilize to help remember medications.
- Increase safety with taking medication, as well as improving medication adherence.
- Treatment methods: Discussion, handouts, activities, and videos.

Self-Advocacy:

- Co-lead with Social Work
- Focus: teaches participants how to advocate for their medical, psychiatric, and psychosocial needs.
- Clients are educated on how to take charge of their own health by learning what questions to ask their providers and how to adequately communicate within the healthcare system.
- Treatment methods: videos, group discussion, and handouts.

Community Mobility

- *This group was created in response to the rising number of pedestrian related injuries in the community.
- Focus: to address pedestrian safety as well as safety when utilizing various modes of transportation.
- Consumers work on increasing safety awareness and the knowledge needed to navigate their community.
- Treatment methods: handouts, videos, group discussion and hands-on activities



CONCLUSION

Adults living with SMI often see a decrease in performance with both their ADLs and IADLs, impacting their independence. Skilled occupational therapy groups can directly address the functional impairments our clients may experience. OT groups focus on the development of functional skills needed to increase independence, assist with community transitioning, and provide education on living a healthy lifestyle, as well as education on self-regulation strategies to assist with emotional regulation.

REFERENCE

Rocamora-Montenegro, M., Compañ-Gabucio, L. M., & Garcia de la Hera, M. (2021). Occupational therapy Interventions for adults with severe mental illness: a scoping review. *BMJ open*, 11(10), e047467. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-047467>