
What is occupational therapy?

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Sometimes following an illness, injury or operation people may have difficulty carrying out their daily activities. Occupational therapists are problem solvers who aim to help people to carry out the activities – or ‘occupations’ - they need to do and want to do. Such activities include personal care, domestic tasks, leisure and work. Occupational therapy ‘provides practical support to empower people to facilitate recovery and overcome barriers preventing them from doing the activities (or occupations) that matter to them’ (Royal College of Occupational Therapists 2019).

What will the hospital occupational therapist do for me?

The occupational therapist will carry out an assessment with you to find out what activities you typically do, the activities you are having difficulty with whilst in hospital, and why this is the case. Together, you will then agree upon treatment goals and plan how to achieve these.

This may involve physical and cognitive rehabilitation, education about alternative coping strategies, or adaption of furniture or household products so you can use them. You may require further occupational therapy when you are discharged from hospital and your occupational therapist will refer you to the relevant community services.

What can the hospital occupational therapist not do?

The occupational therapist cannot arrange for major adaptations to your home such as stair lifts; this service is provided by community occupational therapists who are usually employed by your local council.

The occupational therapist cannot arrange packages of care; this is organised by the discharge planning team, or a care manager/social worker.