



Name: Roya Hosseinimoghaddam

Student ID: 2541272

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Lecturer: Dr. Emmanuel Asante

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1. Written Report

1.1 Introduction

The chosen role is occupational therapist in healthcare and it is chosen as it helps people live their lives irrespective of injuries, illness, and disabilities. It is important due to its ability to restore independence and eliminating the need for long-term care facilities. This report will discuss the background of occupational therapists within the healthcare setting. The skills required for them will be evaluated along with demonstrating the importance of the stated skills. Further, the strategies will be highlighted for improving the skills for occupational therapists.

1.2 Description and Background of Occupational Therapist in Healthcare

Occupational therapists (OTs) are essential in health and social care as they help individuals overcome physical, social, or mental barriers. Accordingly, they focus on holistic, patient-centred rehabilitation and help individuals gain independence in daily activities (rcot.co.uk, 2026). This, in turn, reduces the pressure on institutional patient care services.

Duties performed

OTs take care of a diverse range of tasks tailored according to individual client needs. They perform detailed environmental assessments of the homes and workplaces for identifying the structural barriers. They then recommend as well as train the clients to utilise the adaptive equipment and assistive technologies. Besides, they are responsible for designing customised physical or mental rehabilitation programs and collaborating with multidisciplinary healthcare teams.

Most important duty

The most important duty of an OT is to conduct holistic client assessments. It outlines the unique biological, psychological, and environmental needs of a person (Cucinella *et al.*, 2025). It forms the base needed for creating effective, realistic, and personalised independent living plans.

Required skills

The role of occupational therapist requires a combination of technical and interpersonal abilities to perform the role effectively. It demands active listening for acquiring client goals, critical thinking to solve complex problems. Empathy is required for building trust in vulnerable recovery periods (Deluliis, 2024). Besides, technical knowledge is required to modify living space and configuring equipment.

1.3 Skills Required for Occupational Therapist in Healthcare

An occupational therapist must acquire a blend of technical expertise with interpersonal strength for restoring the independence of clients.

Active listening: It is significant as understanding specific and nuanced goals of the patients builds the foundation of person-centric interventions. For instance, treating a patient who suffered from stroke, along with considering the generic templates, the OTs should listen carefully to the patient's primary desire (Brown *et al.*, 2021). If the patient wants to bake with his grandchildren, the rehabilitation focus needs to be shifted towards functional kitchen tasks.

Assessment and treatment planning: It ensures the professionals are capable of designing customised and clinically sound interventions. For example, in case of an elderly patient suffering from severe arthritis, a rigorous, multi-point home assessment should be done. The exact counters and doorway clearances should be outlined for integrating assistive technology.

Empathy: Occupational therapists are required to navigate highly vulnerable moments thus human connection is considered to be necessary for driving patient compliance. For example, there can be instances of patients with spinal injury becoming frustrated over basic tasks (Hamed and Pagpatan, 2025). In such situations, their emotional distress should be validated, the exercise can be paused and then co-create an adaptive strategy which will preserve the patient's dignity.

Skills helping staff

These skills are known to be empowering healthcare staff to provide accurate, coordinated, and safe care. For instance, a support worker following active listening instead of being dependent on guesswork can identify the actual physical limitations of a patient. On the other hand, technical assessment skills enable nurses to recognise the changing clinical needs (AlHamazani, 2024). Furthermore, empathy provides the capability of transforming routine clinical tasks into meaningful interactions. It helps in building an environment of trust where the patients will feel safe.

Influence of lack of skill on the job

It is identified that lack of essential skills in occupational therapists can compromise heavily with the safety and job performance. Accordingly, the care plans would be misaligned as there would be lack of accurate technical assessments. Thus, the staff would risk assigning misaligned interventions and resulting in poor health outcomes. Moreover, lack of empathy in OTs will make the care feel very mechanical and thus alienate patients (Hedqvist *et al.*, 2025). Furthermore, it is recognised that the staff will not have active listening skills, especially while handovers. It will result in crucial clinical details to be overlooked fostering the risk of medical errors.

1.4 Strategies to Improve Skills for Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapists should engage in targeted professional development for enhancing proficiency in active listening, assessment and treatment planning, and empathy.

Peer-reviewed video reflection and simulation

It revolves around video-recording simulated patient interactions and reviewing them with senior clinicians. The therapists would investigate the non-verbal body language. They would check if the OTs unintentionally interrupted the client and also assess their verbal paraphrasing. For instance, the mock initial interview can be recorded using the 'AOTA Occupational Profile'. This can then be reviewed and can highlight important insights such as the OT looked at their tablet too quickly. This suggests the therapist needs to practice keeping direct eye contact for the first 60 seconds to build a strong initial trust (Romero-Ayuso *et al.*, 2021). Further, the video reflection can offer objective, and undeniable visual feedback on the little behavioural blind spots which can be missed in regular self-appraisal.

Standardised case-study moderation workshops

Through this strategy, the clinicians can gather in a structured group regularly for dissecting complex patient case stories. They would systematically apply the clinical reasoning frameworks. The teams would practice selecting as well as scoring standardised assessment tools such as the Assessment of Motor and Process Skills (AMPS). For instance, in the context of a monthly department workshop, the team can focus on analysing a complex case of stroke. The scoring metrics for executive functioning can be debated on which might correct the over-aggressive treatment plan (Hitch *et al.*, 2021). This would refine it to prioritise safety over advanced tasks. Moreover, case moderation has the ability of directly enhancing technical competence by reducing the diagnostic bias and ensuring alignment of clinical treatment planning with updated evidence-based practice.

Experiential physical immersion

The therapists can willingly enter into the physical realities of their patients by exploring the environments through assistive technologies and adaptive equipment prescribed. For instance, an OT can spend one of their working days operating only from a manual wheelchair in the outpatient facility. Accordingly, using the high counters and heavy fire doors could provide quick insight about the significant physical exhaustion faced by the clients. This would ensure the therapist integrated pacing strategies in the energy conservation plans (Silva and Schwab, 2024). Further, physical immersion would foster a personal understanding of the daily psychological and physiological barriers that change the ways in which the OTs validate their frustrations.

1.5 Conclusion

The report has concluded that occupational therapists help individuals live independently despite their injuries, illness, or disabilities. It is demonstrated that OTs conduct holistic assessments of patients to map out their biological, psychological, and environmental requirements. Further, active listening, precise assessment, and empathy is considered to be

necessary for delivering safe and quality therapy. Besides, these skills are stated to be ensuring the staff avoid mismatched care plans, build patient trust, and avoid critical medical errors. Therefore, the commitment of developing these skills can serve as the foundation of safe and person-centred healthcare safeguarding patient's dignity and improving lives.

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