

Facilitating Recovery through Better Integration of Mental Health Occupational Therapy in Family Practice: Challenges and Opportunities

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure

- None

Objectives

- To examine challenges and opportunities, as well as best practices regarding the integration of mental health occupational therapy (MHOT) services in primary care/family practice (FP)
- To better understand the specific contribution of MHOT in primary care/family practice
- To better understand the OT- FP referral and consultation process

Occupational Therapy & Family Practice in Collaborative Mental Health Care

- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy and the College of Family Physicians of Canada were among 12 national organizations involved in the Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Initiative (CCMHI)
- CCMHI- improving mental health care process and outcomes in primary care through interdisciplinary collaboration

Integration of mental health occupational therapy services in primary care has been slow to occur

National Physician Survey 2007

Regular Collaboration-FPs	Formal Arrangements-FPs
• Psychiatric Nurses: 23.1%	• Psychiatric Nurses: 6.5%
• Other nurses: 56.5%	• Other nurses: 14.7%
• Dieticians: 52.2%	• Dieticians: 13.5%
• Occupational Therapists: 46.9%	• Occupational therapists: 10.5%
• Physiotherapists: 67.4%	• Physiotherapists: 12.0%
• Psychologists: 46.3%	• Psychologists: 10.1%
• Mental health counselors: 39.3%	• Mental health counselors: 10.2%
• Addiction counselors: 29.3%	• Addiction counselors: 7.5%
• Social workers: 54.1%	• Social Workers: 13.2%
• Pharmacists: 73.5%	• Pharmacists: 10.7%

CFPC-eNews Question of the Month

- 1. Regarding the occupational therapist's (OT's) role in mental health care, which statement best describes your knowledge?

9% I understand clearly the role of the OT in this area
 45% I have some idea of the role an OT can play
 46% Uncertain

CFPC eNews-Q of M-2

- 2. Regarding access to OT mental health services in your practice, which statement best describes your practice?

9% The shared care model I participate in enables me to access this service
 22% I refer my patients to OT provided through a community based service
 2% I refer primarily to private OT
 22% I am unable to access this service in my community
 45% I am not sure of the availability of this service in my community

CFPC eNews-Q of M-3

- 3. Regarding timeliness of access to OT mental health services in your practice, which statement best describes your experience?

10% I get timely access to this service
 13% There is a waiting list, but it is acceptable
 16% There is a long waiting list and I feel this has a negative impact on access
 61% Uncertain

Understanding occupational therapy


- A health-care discipline traditionally associated with *rehabilitation and disability*
- In the context of health conditions that are potentially *disabling* the profession is concerned with *function, activity performance and experience, social participation*

Understanding occupational therapy

- *Occupation* defined broadly – “what people do” that is personally and socially meaningful
- Classified according to categories of self-care, leisure and productivity
- O.T. has a long history of working to meet the needs of people with mental illness across the life-span

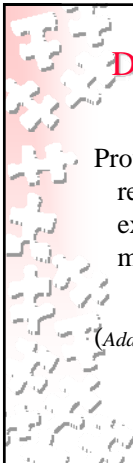
Training and preparation of occupational therapists in Canada

- Graduate level (Masters degree); minimum of 1000 hours of fieldwork
- A regulated health profession - College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- Authorized to perform the controlled act of psychotherapy



Integrating mental health O.T. in primary care – examples and issues


- Literature review – multiple library databases, google scholar
- Google search of examples
- CAOT position papers, practice guidelines,
- CAOT and CIHI for workforce information



Defining a role for O.T. in primary mental health care

Providing non-medical, social and rehabilitation services for those who experience or are at risk for experiencing mental health related disability

(Adapted from McColl, 2008)



Examples of mental health-related O.T. services in primary care

- Functional and role assessments/interventions to support community living
- Employment-related support and interventions
- Lifestyle design/Time use planning
- School/Academic Liaison
- Addressing home/community personal safety issues
- Assessment for disability insurance claims/disability tax credits
- Assessment of driving abilities

Integration of mental health O.T. in primary care: Issues and challenges

- Rehabilitation vs. medical perspective
- Accountability and governance
- Leadership
- Expertise of individual therapist
- Referral-consultation process
- Moving towards a population based approach

Enablers-What the literature and lived experience tell us

- Importance of the relationship-clear understanding of respective roles and responsibilities, trust
- Importance of structured communication
- Case based/problem focused approach
- Shared goals

Referral-What the family doctor needs to do

- Location: home vs clinic/community center
- Specificity of the referral and consultation in relation to providers= fostering of relationship, for example
 - For the referral: a checklist of the kinds of intervention the OT can offer

Consultation-What the family doctor needs to know

- The specific services offered eg. education, skill development, environmental modifications, devices/equipment
- Frequency of contact with OT
- Estimated time frame of intervention
- How to best communicate with OT
- All on one page

The referral process-What the OT needs to know

- Basic demographic information
- Nature of daily living/function/activity issues of concern
- Broad statement of goal of O.T. services
- Consent for referral
- Specific issues/considerations for the delivery of service

Conclusions

- Incomplete understanding of the role and availability of services of MHOT in primary care/family practice
- Challenges include: differences in approach to care, issues of accountability & governance, funding models for care
- Enablers include: a climate fostering establishment and maintenance of the relationship, good understanding of roles, shared goals, a case based/problem based approach
- Further research needed around efficiency
