

Occupational Therapy

Nature of the Profession

Occupational therapists (OTs) help individuals with physically, developmentally or emotionally disabling conditions to recover and improve daily living and work skills. They help patients to enhance basic motor functions and reasoning abilities. They also help patients to compensate for permanent loss of function. Their goal is to enable patients to achieve independent, productive and satisfying lives.

When ability is diminished or impaired, OTs work to restore performance in everyday life activities including self-care, leisure and work. For those with permanent disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy, occupational therapists develop ways for patients to accomplish tasks through compensation and modified actions. They provide adaptive equipment such as wheelchairs, splints, and aids for eating and dressing. They also design special equipment to help the patient function at home or work.

APTITUDES

- Ability to learn the techniques of occupational therapy
- Good verbal abilities to read, write, and speak
- Good space and form perception and manual dexterity
- Ability to make decisions and to solve problems
- Objective view of illnesses and disabilities
- Ability to motivate people
- Patience and a desire to help others

EDUCATION

The minimum educational requirement is an entry-level masters or clinical doctorate in occupational therapy from an accredited institution.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

- College of Saint Mary – Omaha (M)
- Creighton Health Sciences – Omaha (D)

LICENSURE / CERTIFICATION

An applicant for a license to practice as an occupational therapist must complete the requirements of an approved program, complete six months of supervised fieldwork, and pass the certification exam.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.
Web Address: www.aota.org

Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.
Web Address: www.notaonline.org