



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MENTAL HEALTH

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides occupational therapy services to Veterans and Service members for prevention and intervention of mental health problems to increase emphasis on recovery and function directed toward participation in daily life occupations.

## SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Occupations are defined as meaningful activities that people engage in throughout their daily lives to fulfill their time. OTs help Veterans develop and maintain healthy ways of living in their home, workplace, and community. Occupational Therapists (OTs) are trained to select and use evaluations and interventions that not only promote mental health, but also address physical, sensory, interpersonal, and cognitive function affecting Veterans' abilities to participate in daily life while considering their interests, habits, and roles.

### AREAS ADDRESSED

- Social Skills/Assertiveness, Cognition (e.g., attention, memory, problem solving), Pain Management, and Coping/Stress Management
- Community Living and Reintegration (e.g., using community resources, time management, grocery shopping), Avocations (e.g., leisure planning, volunteering), Activities of Daily Living (e.g., self-care, hygiene), Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (e.g., cooking, cleaning, money management, driving, medication routines), Role development (e.g., parenting, student, employee)
- Group and one-to-one counseling and treatments, Including Behavioral Therapy, Illness Management and Recovery, Seeking Safety, Desensitization, Motivational Interviewing,

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES

OTs provide inpatient and outpatient services, including substance abuse programs, psychosocial rehabilitation centers, domiciliary care, homeless programs, vocational programs, and trauma programs. The practice of OT includes:

- Restoration of a skill or ability that has not yet developed or is impaired
- Modification of an activity or environment to enhance performance and independence
- Assisting in developing habits and routines to foster a sense of purpose and support a wellness lifestyle
- Improving community and social participation through communication and social skills training and real life practice
- Teaching and supporting coping strategies