



Occupational therapy and **DEPRESSION**

Occupational therapy
Helping people to live life their way



Depression – how occupational therapy can help

Introduction

If you are living with depression, an occupational therapist can support and guide you to manage your symptoms to help you lead a fulfilling life.

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy enables people to participate in daily life to improve their health and wellbeing. Daily life is made up of many activities (or occupations). Occupations may include self-care (getting ready to go out or eating a meal), being productive (going to work or volunteering), and leisure (socialising with friends or doing hobbies).

Occupational therapy can help you

Occupational therapists can help you if you are living with depression to feel motivated and confident to do the occupations that are important to you. They will work with you to develop a structure and routine that you can manage on a daily basis, taking into account your particular responsibilities and roles. An occupational therapist will also work with you to develop coping strategies so you can achieve your recovery goals.

Here are some examples of the different ways occupational therapy can help you:

Going to work

Having persistent negative thoughts can undermine your confidence at work

An occupational therapist can review your work role, responsibilities and environment to identify how you can achieve the most at work. They will break down your work tasks and demonstrate ways your skills and knowledge can be applied so you gain a sense of achievements. With your permission, your work colleagues can also be given expert advice on how to support you in the workplace.

Socialising with family and friends

Withdrawing socially means you are not communicating with friends and family who care and want to help you

An occupational therapist can help you regain your social skills so you can spend quality time with friends and family. An occupational therapist will teach simple coping strategies and work with you to improve your confidence and interaction skills so you can feel comfortable with other people.

Managing daily routines

Daily tasks such as getting out of bed and personal care can be overwhelming

An occupational therapist will demonstrate techniques such as breaking down tasks into manageable steps, goal setting and problem solving, so you can feel able to do tasks such as getting out of bed and taking care of yourself.

Finding support and networks

Feeling isolated and alone can amplify depression

An occupational therapist will help you overcome your sense of isolation by connecting you to community based networks and groups. They will suggest you attend meetings and events that will give you a sense of purpose and support in your local area.



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For more information about occupational therapy, visit the College of Occupational Therapists website.

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Occupational therapists are health and social care professionals who help people of all ages – babies, children, adults and older people – to carry out activities (or occupations) they need, want, or are expected to do, but are prevented from doing so as a result of physical or mental illness, disability, or as a result of changes in their lives as they get older.

Occupational therapists can suggest alternative ways of doing activities, providing advice on learning new approaches, helping people to get the most from life. For example, an occupational therapist can help people with the following activities:

Self-care	Getting dressed or preparing and eating meals.
Productivity	Going to or remaining in work, volunteering, studying, or caring for others.
Leisure	Playing sports, shopping, or doing hobbies.

How to find an occupational therapist

Ask your GP, nurse, social worker or other health or social care professional to refer you to an occupational therapist.

You can self-refer to a social services occupational therapist by contacting your local council* to arrange an appointment.

Some places of work have an HR department or occupational health department. You can ask either of these to refer you to an occupational therapist.

To arrange a private consultation with an independent occupational therapist, who will charge you a fee, please visit www.cotss-ip.org.uk to find a local independent occupational therapist.

*Social Care and Health Department of your local council in Scotland

*Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland

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