



Employment and rehabilitation

Question 1:

How are employment needs currently addressed by occupational therapists, and how might our services and interventions be adjusted to better meet people's employment needs?

- Importance of meaningful occupations.
- Many employers lack understanding of the needs of people with health issues e.g. reasonable adjustments.
- The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model/approach is widely used across the UK and is evidence-based.
- IPS needs to be used more with young people and should be expanded within secondary mental health services.
- We need to reduce stigma towards people with mental health problems.
- Occupational therapists should work for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)/Job Centre Plus.
- There are some pilot services which demonstrate the value of occupational therapy within DWP which involve occupational therapy students. These students are supported by work coaches.
- These pilots could be used within the third sector.
- Health and Work Champions were briefly discussed.
- Occupational therapists working in GP surgeries focusing on vocational rehabilitation.
- There are some 'Advanced Practice' occupational therapists working in GP surgeries.
- RCOT Primary Care web page discussed.
- An occupational therapist has been seconded to primary care doing vocational rehabilitation, using their dual-training (mental and physical health). Reflections have been fed back to the Primary Care Steering Group.
- Job retention work.
- Use of condition-management programmes



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Question 2:

How do we create rehab interventions and services that improve the health and employment of disadvantaged people FASTER than the rest of the population?

- Importance of person-centred approach.
- There is discrimination and unequal access to services for people who find it difficult to engage and/or come from disadvantaged backgrounds; for example, people who: are homeless; have addiction issues, come from BAME communities, long-term health conditions, mental health problems.
- Engage with third sector partners.
- Provide employment support to those in work.
- Use IPS to help engage people.
- Work with employers to reduce stigma regarding employees mental health.
- Importance of job retention.
- Provide support to employers.
- Important to promote the therapeutic value of work.
- Some occupational therapists work in mental health employment services.
- Importance of building relationships with employers; try to get to know them before providing interventions.
- There should be robust confidential systems to share employment information about a person (with their informed consent).
- Impact of COVID-19.



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Question 3:

How can we align with local and national partners to advocate for change to address inequalities in employment for the people we work with and wider communities?

- PHE funding IPS projects.
- We need to prepare for mass unemployment post-COVID-19.
- We need to work more with schools and colleges.
- In Scotland, the DWP and Health fund vocational rehabilitation jointly.
- There is little perceived benefit to the NHS if employers benefit from vocational rehabilitation.
- Value of integrated services.
- We need more occupational therapists working in occupational health.
- The shift to a more virtual/digital world has its disadvantages regarding engaging with people.
- Some large occupational health businesses have been providing free IT kits to people to enable them to work from home.