



COTEC AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS IN EUROPE SUPPORT THE INITIATIVE OF EPF ON PATIENTS EMPOWERMENT

Occupational therapy is a profession with its base in health and social care. Occupational therapists strive to enable clients of all ages who have limitations in occupational performance and the ability to actively participate in society, due to physical and/or mental and/or cognitive disorders, to live their lives according to their wishes and to perform those activities that are meaningful to them because they want to, need to or are expected to.

One of the core values of Occupational Therapy is Patient Empowerment

As the client is the expert on his/her own life, condition and wishes, the client and the occupational therapist identify together the client's needs and goals, by using client centered methods and instruments. The means of achieving the goals is determined in close cooperation with the client, their partners/ family and caregivers.

The result of the Occupational Therapy (OT) process is a person who is empowered to be in charge of the performance of meaningful occupations as part of his/her life, who is able to make his/her own choices, and who is able to adapt and to self-manage in the face of social, physical and emotional challenges.



Occupational Therapists can support the empowerment of their clients by embracing the 5 E's of the EPF Patient Empowerment Campaign:

Expertise

The expertise of the client is acknowledged in the therapy process, education and research

Occupational therapists know that the client is and should be the expert in living his/her own life. The client's current and desired competences are the basis on which the Occupational therapist and client build the process to achieve the client's goals.

There are quite some examples of OT research projects with active client involvement, clients as co researcher and client-led research.



Education

Education is a two way process



Education is a two way process and clients are involved in education of OT students and OT practitioners enabling those health professionals to learn from the clients expertise.

Client peer support groups invite occupational therapists to run targeted learning sessions to address particular topics. Occupational therapists encourage, support and facilitate clients to establish peer support and peer learning groups.



Information about the client's situation, including disabilities and possibilities, self-management strategies, options of problem solving are presented appropriately to the client's needs and level of understanding and then discussed to enable him/her to make an informed decision. The client is supported and stimulated to find solutions for him/herself.

Education and information is focused on the client and is evidence based and context based.

Examples of ways of information and education are:

Training and education in e.g. communication skills, gathering information, action planning, self-management strategies, such as role- and or energy management.

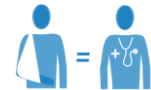
Education, vocational training

Education leaflets targeted for specific groups with information about what OT can offer, such as adaptations in the workplace, rights according to laws, relevant organizations.

Equality

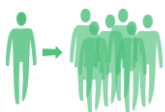
The relationship of the client and the OT is built on mutual respect for each other's expertise and decisions

Occupational therapists work in partnership with the client and use their professional expertise to facilitate the client in his/her endeavors to reach his/her goals. Occupational therapists embrace cultural diversity and are trained to communicate and work with clients of all ages and cultures.



Experience

Occupational therapy is a process of learning and experiencing by doing



The experience of the client is taken seriously and the experience of the OT is shared with the client. By actually performing everyday activities the client is experiencing new ways of doing things. The process is regularly evaluated so that the doing, the experiences and satisfaction with the outcomes are measured.

Engagement

Engagement in activities and daily life, and participation in society is the goal of OT

Occupational therapists believe that engagement in daily life activities and participation in society are essential for a person's identity, health and wellbeing.



Occupational therapists not only focus on the client, but also on the other persons in his system of support and/or social network. Only with engagement of all stakeholders in the network of the client (e.g. partner, family members, social network, and (professional) caregivers), can occupational therapy support the optimal participation of clients in society.