



WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN CHRONIC PAIN MANAGEMENT



Pain is the one thing that stops us in our tracks. It interrupts us, changes our behaviour and prevents us from doing things we enjoy and becoming the best versions of ourselves. It influences our ability to participate in our activities of daily living.

Chronic pain can be defined as pain that has outlived its usefulness and persists despite healing of the body's tissues. It is difficult to understand and often difficult to treat.

Occupational Therapy in Chronic Pain Management forms part of an interdisciplinary team approach and aims to help people with chronic pain understand what is going on in their bodies, to become effective self-managers of their condition and symptoms, to put the life back into living, and to provide practical tools and strategies to meet the demands of everyday activities.

Occupational Therapists are experts at adapting and analysing activities and helping people set goals to achieve success despite their medical condition. People in pain often struggle with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness - Occupational Therapy aims to give back control and to increase participation in activities that provide meaning, purpose and value... **to make life worth living again.**

WHEN DO I NEED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

- If you are unable to do the things that give your life meaning because of your pain
- If you are struggling at work, or are unable to work because of pain
- If you are having difficulty sleeping because of pain or find that you are unable to have a healthy day routine
- If your relationships are affected and you are having difficulty adapting to the changes in your life that have happened because of pain
- If you find that you are anxious or depressed because of pain
- If you have the need to change your lifestyle and manage your condition in a more balanced way
- If you are looking for alternative approaches to pain management



WHO ARE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS?

Occupational therapy is a regulated health profession and requires specific university training which complies with national and international standards of training. The training of an OT is grounded in the Biopsychosocial approach to healthcare, the very foundation of *CHRONIC PAIN MANAGEMENT*.

HOW DO I SCHEDULE AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY APPOINTMENT

If your chronic pain condition is compromising your ability to participate in daily activities, fulfill life roles or function optimally at work, speak to your doctor, physiotherapist or employer about a referral for occupational therapy services, or look for a private practice serving chronic pain clients in your community, or contact otpainmanagement@gmail.com or www.trainpainacademy.co.za or www.painsa.co.za to find an OT who has specific training in chronic pain management.

WHY WOULD I NEED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?



OT can help you understand what is going on in your body so that you can manage your condition more effectively



OT can help you set realistic goals that you can achieve successfully and gradually increase your participation in meaningful activities



OT can help you make lifestyle changes that could assist you to manage your pain better



OT can help adapt activities so that you can participate while keeping your pain under control



OT can help you get back to work, or stay at work



OT can help improve your participation in activities that you enjoy and engagement in life roles that add meaning to your life



OT can improve your quality of life



OT can consider the physical, emotional and social factors influenced by your pain and aims to improve function in each of these areas with a biopsychosocial approach

PRACTICE:

Get more information about occupational therapy at www.instopp.co.za

This document was compiled for INSTOPP by Linda Hiemstra