

The Role of Occupational Therapy in Perinatal Mental Health

Scope of Practice

Evaluation	<p>Evaluation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Environmental Factors- Personal Factors- Performance Patterns- Performance Skills- Activity Analysis <p>Focus on evaluation to determine any factors that affect the ability to perform important activities, roles, habits, and routines.</p> <p>(OTA, 2020; Kielhofner, 2008).</p>
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Therapeutic use of occupations and activities-Interventions to support occupations-Education-Training-Advocacy-Self-advocacy-Group Intervention-Virtual Intervention <p>Goal of Intervention: Improve engagement in daily occupations, activities, habits, routines, and roles.</p> <p>(OTA, 2020; Kielhofner, 2008).</p>

Conditions for Referral

Current Referrals Made to an Occupational Therapy Practitioner

A patient having concerns in the following areas, a referral should be made to an occupational therapy practitioner.

Breastfeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development of feeding routines- Proper positioning- Latching techniques- Suck-Swallow-Breathe Reflex and use during breastfeeding (Pitonyak, 2014; Sponseller et al.,2021)
Developmental Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improving parent-child relationships- Increased child participation in age-appropriate activities and routines- Promoting development- Caregiver training- proper body mechanics for lifting, feeding, and changing clothes/diapers.- Routine and role adaptation for increased ease of caregiving tasks (AOTA, 2018)
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prevention of injury through education of proper body mechanics during caregiving tasks (lifting, carrying a car seat, breastfeeding)- Treating injuries that result from caretaking tasks (carpal tunnel, DeQuervains) (AOTA 2018; Fernandes, 2018)
NICU education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Infant cues: recognizing and responding appropriately to an infant's behavioral cue. Recognizing pain, stress, hunger, and satisfaction cues.- Soothing strategies to promote rest and sleep for the infant.- Environmental adaptations to promote rest, sleep, and an appropriate development of the infant's sensory system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensory system education-physical environments effect on sensory system, education to promote regulation and development. - Education of parenting skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Enhances parental and infant bonding and attachment o Diapering o Bathing <p>(AOTA, 2018)</p>
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Potential Areas of Referral to an Occupational Therapy Practitioner

Occupations that occupational therapy can address that can improve the perinatal experience (AOTA, 2020)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - According to a leading document in the occupational therapy field, <i>the occupational therapy practice framework</i>, occupational therapy works to improve client’s engagement in valuable occupations. Occupational therapist work to provide habilitate, rehabilitate, and promote health and wellness for all individuals with a variety of needs. - Occupational therapy emphasizes the occupational nature of humans and the importance of an individual’s occupational identity. - The primary focus of occupational therapists is occupation. Occupations are everyday activities that people participate in as individuals, families, or with communities that occupy their time and bring meaning to their life. - Co-occupations are occupations that involve two or more individuals. Caretaking is considered a co-occupation. 	
Child rearing	Providing care to support development of a child and meeting their individual physiological needs (Corrigan et al., 2015; McAuliffe et al., 2019; Tsai & Wang, 2019)
Feeding (breastfeeding)	Setting up and bring food or fluid to one’s own mouth or another individual (Kuswara et al., 2021; McAuliffe et al., 2019; Tsai & Wang, 2019).
Home establishment and management	Obtaining and maintaining personal and household possessions and environments (McAuliffe et al., 2019).

Social and emotional health promotion and maintenance	Identifying personal strengths and assets, managing emotions, using occupations and social interactions to support overall health and wellness. Working to develop a form of self-identity and making individualized choices to improve overall quality of life (Bentley & Zamir, 2021).
Symptom and condition management	Managing physical and mental health needs. Can include coping strategies use to manage and regulation of emotions, recognizing symptom changes, using community and social supports, and navigating the health care system (Kuswara et al., 2021; Tsai & Wang, 2019).
Rest/Sleep Preparation	Identifying the need to relax, preparing area for sleep for promoting rest and relaxation, development of routines before bed, adaptation of environment to promote relaxation (McQuillan et al., 2019; Tsai & Wang, 2019)
Social Participation	Promoting activities that result in increased engagement with peer and social support to promote increased wellbeing and health (Rizzo & Watsford, 2020).

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