

# Occupational Therapy and Community Mental Health: A Pilot Project in New Hampshire

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## Objectives:

- ▶ Understand the role of occupational therapy in community mental and behavioral health settings
- ▶ Provide examples of how occupational therapy services fit into NH's CBHC model
- ▶ Discuss current initiatives focused on implementing occupational therapy into CBHCs, including current practice, policy and reimbursement

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## What is Occupational Therapy?

"Man, through the use of his hands, as they are energized by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health." Dr. Mary Reilly Ph.D, OTR/L, 1962



Reilly (1962)

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## Foundations of OT

- ▶ People have the ability to positively impact their health and participation when given the right knowledge, tools, and supports
- ▶ People need to be the driver of their own behavioral change
- ▶ People need to be given opportunities to learn/practice behavioral change through "doing"
- ▶ Participation in a balanced life is key to health and independence

Fisher, A. & Marterella, A. (2019).

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## Occupations of Everyday Life



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## Group Activity:

- ▶ Turn to your neighbor and introduce yourself-
- ▶ What did you say?
- ▶ Occupation-is closely tied to our identity
  - ▶ Defines our roles
  - ▶ Helps us understand relationships, status

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## Understanding Occupation

### Habits/Routines

Structure and organize day

Survive and Thrive

### Identity

Competence and Confidence

Self-Efficacy

### Roles

Relationships with others/community

Belonging

Christiansen (1999); Christiansen (2004)

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## Group Activity 2:

Turn to your neighbor and discuss:

- ▶ 3 activities that you do everyday
- ▶ What helps you do these activities?
- ▶ 3 activities that you wish you could do more
- ▶ What gets in the way of you doing these?
- ▶ How do your experiences compare to those living with mental health conditions?

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## Occupation and Health

"... encompassing, positive, dynamic, state of 'well-being' reflecting adaptability, a good quality of life, and satisfaction in one's own activities."

Yerxa (1998)



▶ Breaking this cycle requires:

- ▶ Adaptation
- ▶ Behavioral change
- ▶ Development of new skills
- ▶ Modification of the environment or activities

Yerxa, E. (1998); Wilcock (2006)

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## OT and Recovery



- Promote adaptation
  - Wholistic assessment of strengths and functional challenges
  - Education and collaboration with client and team members
- Facilitate skill building
  - Cognitive remediation/habilitation
  - Illness management and health promotion
  - Self-regulation and coping
  - Social participation
  - Habit/Routine development
- Modify environment/activities
  - Home safety
  - Organization

Share Facts Save Lives, 2024

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## A Client Story




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### OTs Recognized as Qualified Mental Health Providers (QMHPs) in

- ▶ **National Level:**
  - Recognized as QMHPs by Centers for Medicaid and Medicare
- ▶ **State Level:**
  - 13 states recognize OTs as QMHPs in the definition.
  - 15 states have a definition that would include OT as QMHP as they are not explicit lists, but degree and training based.
- ▶ **Internationally:** In Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia, mental and behavioral health services **regularly include OT services in hospital, community, and crisis care**

AOTA (2024)

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## So why don't I work with any OTs?

### Reimbursement

- **Occupational Therapists are not QMHPs in NH**
- No mechanism to bill OT CPT codes in community based settings
- **Building the infrastructure for OT in the documentation and billing system takes time and money**

### Workforce Development

- Limited OT practitioners in this setting to train new OTs mean a limited number of students can be trained
- Lack of community BH positions for OT practitioners in NH

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## Changing Policy

- ▶ Since 2017 NHOA, OT academic programs have been working to create opportunities for OT in CBHCs in NH
  - Creating academic-community partnerships to provide OT programming with CBHCs and Substance Recovery Centers
  - Creating an OT in CBHCs Implementation project with 2 CBHCs
  - Advocating and collaborating with state to create reimbursement mechanisms



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## In New Hampshire...

- ▶ 2017-2022: UNH Departments of OT and Social Work received a HRSA-BHWET grant to develop an interprofessional training program in integrated primary care behavioral health.
- ▶ 37 students were placed in community settings both primary care and behavioral health.
- ▶ MCPHS OT students running groups in a CBHC



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## OT in CBHC Implementation Project



- ▶ Representative from MCPHS connected with CLM in early 2023 to explore options for OT programming
- ▶ NHOTA, MCPHS, UNH connected with CLM, MHCGM and Network4Health in Fall of 2023
- ▶ Proposal for funding a full time per diem OT position was submitted December 2023

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## Project Timeline-Alexa



- ▶ **January 2024:** Funding for a per diem OT at CLM and MHCGM was approved
- ▶ **March 2024:**
  - Collaboratively, the CBHCs hired an OT
  - A research plan was developed and submitted to the work group
- ▶ **April 2024:** IRB Approval
- ▶ **May 2024:**
  - OT training and start data collection
  - Started working with DHHS about sustainability
- ▶ **Oct 2024:** Additional funding to hire an OTA
- ▶ **Nov 2024:**
  - OTA start
  - Midpoint survey
- ▶ **June 2025:** End of data collection

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### Study Goal:

To measure aspects of implementing an OT position in the CBHC setting using an evidenced based framework.

Acceptance	Reach	Adoption	Utilization	Sustainability
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We hypothesize that there will be a change in staff awareness, acceptance and subsequent utilization of occupational therapy over the course of the study.

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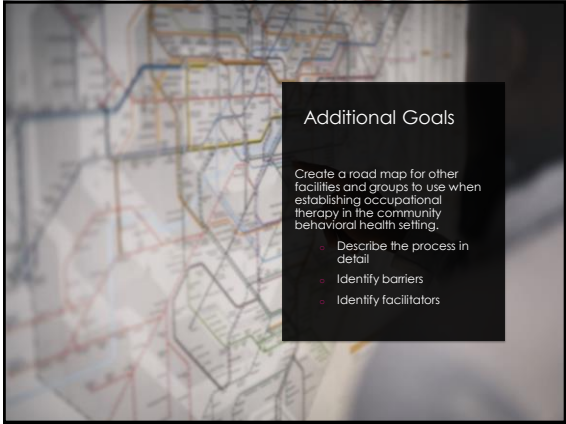
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### Additional Goals

Create a road map for other facilities and groups to use when establishing occupational therapy in the community behavioral health setting.

- Describe the process in detail
- Identify barriers
- Identify facilitators

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## Measuring Reach, Adoption, and Sustainability

- ▶ The data that will be collected by and about the OT
  - Hours worked
  - Number of clients referred
  - Number of clients seen
  - Type and amount of treatment expressed in CPT codes
  - Productivity
  - Divisions that are utilizing OT
  - Evaluation tools most utilized

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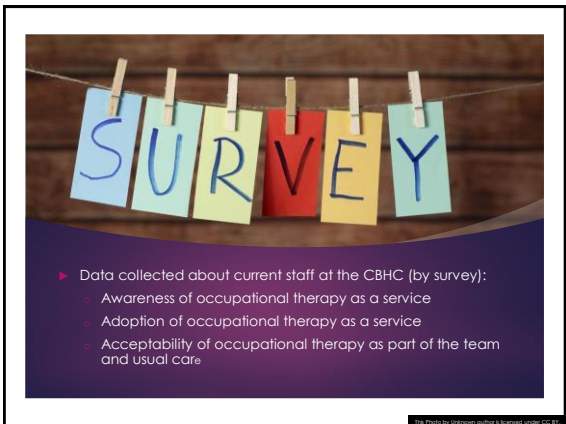
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- ▶ Data collected about current staff at the CBHC (by survey):
  - Awareness of occupational therapy as a service
  - Adoption of occupational therapy as a service
  - Acceptability of occupational therapy as part of the team and usual care

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## Reimbursement

- ▶ Meetings have started with DHHS, NHOTA and representatives from the CBHC system.
- ▶ Meetings are ongoing, a work in progress
- ▶ Two aspects:
  - including OT as a reimbursable service in community behavioral health
  - Moving the CBHCs in New Hampshire towards CCBHC status



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## Activity

Have you worked with OT in the past?  
How would you use OT in your work?  
What information would you need in order to add OT to your services?  
How can we help you?



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## Questions

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## Key Points

- ▶ Occupational Therapy has a unique value in Community Behavioral Health
- ▶ We are actively pursuing implementation of OT programs in the CBHC setting
- ▶ We are seeking opportunities to scale OT program implementation to other CBHCs. If you are interested, contact us!

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