

PHYSICAL THERAPY/OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

DESCRIPTION OF SESSION

This session provides participants with an understanding of physical and occupational therapy and how they fit into the overall health care profession. Both occupational and physical therapy and their similarities and differences will be discussed.

CATEGORY

- Health
- Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify the differences between physical therapy and occupational therapy.
- Discuss the educational requirements of both specialties.
- Recognize equipment and treatment modalities utilized by physical and occupational therapists.
- Understand physical challenges that some people face.
- Tour a physical therapy and/or occupational treatment facility.

SUPPLIES

- Laptop computer or equipment to view videos
- Flip chart or marker board and markers to record times for each individual and their activity
- **Activity 1 supplies**—jar with screw-top lid, shoes with laces, shirt with buttons, book, stack of papers, baseball and glove, stopwatch
- **Activity 2 supplies**—two pairs of heavy socks (e.g., tall athletic or hiking socks), a small box of raisins, several pieces of tightly wrapped candy, stopwatch
- **Activity 4 supplies**—a selection of adaptive equipment and physical therapy equipment Explorers can try using, as available
- **Activity 5 supplies**—loose clothing, gown or pajamas, ID bracelet, nonlatex balloons, disposable safety razors, food items for patient trays

PREPARATION

- Arrange for a professional to speak about physical therapy and/or occupational therapy.
- Arrange for a tour of a physical and/or occupational therapy facility.

VIDEOS

Reminder: Any time you use an outside source, be sure you follow the content owner's or website's permission requirements and guidelines.

Advisors should preview videos before showing them to make sure they are appropriate for the post.

- [“Physical Therapists–Career Spotlight”](#) from Kids.gov
- [“Occupational Therapy as a Career”](#) from the College of Occupational Therapists
- [“History of Occupational Therapy Timeline Video”](#) from psalmseeker

RESOURCES

Reminder: Any time you use an outside source, be sure you follow the content owner's or website's permission requirements and guidelines.

The following are suggested resources that Advisors may find helpful in planning this session:

[“Benefits of Physical Therapy”](#) from the American Physical Therapy Association

[“About Physical Therapists \(PTs\) and Physical Therapist Assistants \(PTAs\)”](#) from the American Physical Therapy Association

[“The History of Physical Therapy: A Brief Look”](#) from Physical Therapy Connect.com

[“What Technologies Do Physical Therapists Use?”](#) from Teachnology

[“History of Occupational Therapy”](#) from OT 111 Quinnipiac University

[“Adaptive Equipment Used in School Settings”](#) from North Shore School District

ADVISOR NOTE: Text in italics should be read aloud to participants. As you engage your post in activities each week, please include comments, discussions, and feedback to the group relating to **Character**, **Leadership**, and **Ethics**. These are important attributes that make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

ACTIVITIES

Introduction

Tell participants: *Physical therapy is the treatment of disease, injury, or deformity by physical methods such as massage, heat treatment, and exercise rather than by medication or surgery.*

Occupational therapy involves treatment to develop, recover, or maintain the daily living and work skills of people who have physical, mental, or cognitive disorders.

ACTIVITY 1

Speaker

Physical Therapy

Have a physical therapy professional address these topics:

- Overview of physical therapy including history (you may choose to show the video [“Physical Therapists–Career Spotlight”](#) from Kids.gov if a speaker is not available)
- Educational requirements and recommendations for high school and college preparation courses
- Benefits and limitations of physical therapy
- Physical therapy equipment and treatment modalities

Occupational Therapy

Have an occupational therapy professional address these topics:

- Overview of occupational therapy including history (you may choose to show the video [“Occupational Therapy as a Career”](#) from the College of Occupational Therapists if a speaker is not available)
- Educational requirements and recommendations for high school and college preparation courses (you may choose to show the video [“History of Occupational Therapy Timeline Video”](#) from psalmseeker if a speaker is not available)
- Benefits and limitations of occupational therapy

- Types of adaptive equipment
- Explain the differences between physical and occupational therapy.
- Discuss traditional and nontraditional settings for both physical and occupational therapists (e.g. nursing homes, home health care, educational systems).

ACTIVITY 2

Arm Impairment Simulation

Have participants attempt different activities **using only one hand**. This would simulate an amputee, stroke victim, or someone with muscular impairment, a fracture, or an extremity trauma. You may wish to have participants use their dominant hand first and then try the activity again with their nondominant hand.

Ideas include the following (feel free to add your own):

- Opening a jar with a screw-top lid
- Tying their shoes
- Holding a stack of papers and handing out one sheet at a time
- Buttoning their shirt
- Holding a book and turning the pages
- Playing catch

ACTIVITY 3

Muscular Disability Simulation

This activity would simulate a muscular disability such as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, or multiple sclerosis. These activities can be done individually or simultaneously with several participants at a time.

- Have participants place two heavy socks over each of their hands.
- Ask them to remove just one raisin from the box.
- Then ask them to unwrap one piece of candy.
- Have participants compare techniques and length of time required to complete the task. Ask them what other activities in their daily lives would be challenging.

ACTIVITY 4

Equipment Exploration

- Break into small groups and take turns using various types of adaptive equipment.
- Break into small groups and take turns using various types of physical therapy equipment.

ACTIVITY 5

Occupational Therapy Scenario

- Read the following scenario to participants. Then initiate a discussion using the questions that follow.

You have been assigned to work on the rehabilitation unit today. Your first patient is an 82-year-old gentleman named Roger. Roger had a stroke two weeks ago that left him very weak on the right side. He

is right-handed, so he gets frustrated very easily. He also has very poor vision and has been declared “legally blind.” He lost his vision due to his diabetes. Roger wears dentures on the top, but has been able to keep his own teeth on the bottom. It is policy that all patients on the rehabilitation unit must be dressed in loose clothing and out of bed, sitting in their wheelchairs for breakfast. You do not need to worry about Roger’s bath, as this has been done by the 3–11 shift.

Your assignment is to assist Roger with the above tasks, as well as with his breakfast, so he will not be late for his morning therapy session. Roger is very independent and wants to feed himself; he just needs some assistance. Roger also asks you for a special favor. He knows you are busy, but he has not had a shave in two days, and his whiskers are getting pretty scratchy.

Questions

- What skills do you need to perform and in what order should they be done?
- Because Roger is visually impaired but wants to feed himself, how can you help him remember where the food is located on his tray?
- Which side of the body will you undress first and why? Which side of the body will you dress first?

Teaching Tips/Strategies:

- Have several different types of clothing for participants to choose from when dressing the patient.
- A participant posing as the patient should have on a gown or pajamas and needs to wear an ID bracelet.
- The patient has right-side weakness, so participants need to take soiled clothes off the unaffected (left) side first.
- Balloons can be blown up and a face drawn on them. Explorers can practice shaving the balloon if you do not want them to shave another person. If the balloon pops, it means they cut the patient.
- Prepare several food trays that represent different diets for different patients. One could have sugar-free gelatin and a diet drink for the diabetic. A regular diet could have some pudding, cereal, etc. It is a good idea to find something for each tray that the patient has to cut up. Be sure to include drinks, silverware, napkins, and straws. You can also include seasonings such as salt and pepper packets from fast-food restaurants.
- Participants need to check the patient’s name band with the name on the food tray.
- The patient has very poor vision, so the clock method should be used when describing the location of food on the tray.

(Occupational therapy scenario, questions, and teaching tips from Pearson. Used with permission.)

ACTIVITY 6

Tour

- Tour a physical or occupational therapy facility

ADVISOR NOTE

Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions that relate to your post or specific focus area.

REFLECTION

Focusing Questions

- *Do you know anyone in your family or close to you who has gone through physical or occupational therapy? Can you share some stories with us?*
- *What did you observe in either the physical or occupational therapy facility?*
- *How difficult was it to complete tasks using the adaptive equipment?*
- *What specialty are you most interested in? Why?*
- *What did you learn during today's discussion?*

Analysis Questions

- *What would you experience if you could not use one of your hands? What other activities would be difficult in your daily life?*
- *What types of ethical issues do you think could arise related to performing physical or occupational therapy?*

Generalization Questions

- *What can you do now, during your time as a student, to prepare yourself for this or a similar career in the medical field?*
- *Why is this topic important?*

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