

# Occupational Therapy in Mental Health



**Skills for Living**

# OT & Mental Health

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As part of the Commonwealth Governments' Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative, new Medicare items are available for patients to access specialised Mental Health Occupational Therapists.

# OT & Mental Health

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**Specialist mental health  
occupational therapists  
have concerns about  
Mental Health issues and  
the impact on  
Occupational Functioning.**



# What is Occupation?

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**Occupation refers to the many activities, tasks and roles in a persons' life.**

**Occupational therapists help people to enhance their ability to participate meaningful occupations, or to modify their environment to better support participation.**



# Who do Mental Health Occupational Therapists work with?

## Illness

- Mental health conditions – anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar, stress-related illness
- Chronic conditions – eg: chronic pain and fatigue

## Disabilities

Emotional – eg: burnout, PTSD

Cognitive – eg: chronic schizophrenia

Social – eg: social skills delay or anxiety

Physical – eg: poor health, secondary conditions

Spiritual – eg: lack of meaning/purpose

## Life Changes/ Stages

- Grief and loss of loved one, an ability or meaningful life roles
- Becoming a carer
- Starting, disruption to or leaving work (stress leave, retirement redundancy)

# Practice Standards

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For **Occupational Therapists working in mental health**, the discipline specific practice standards, competencies and curricula which apply are:

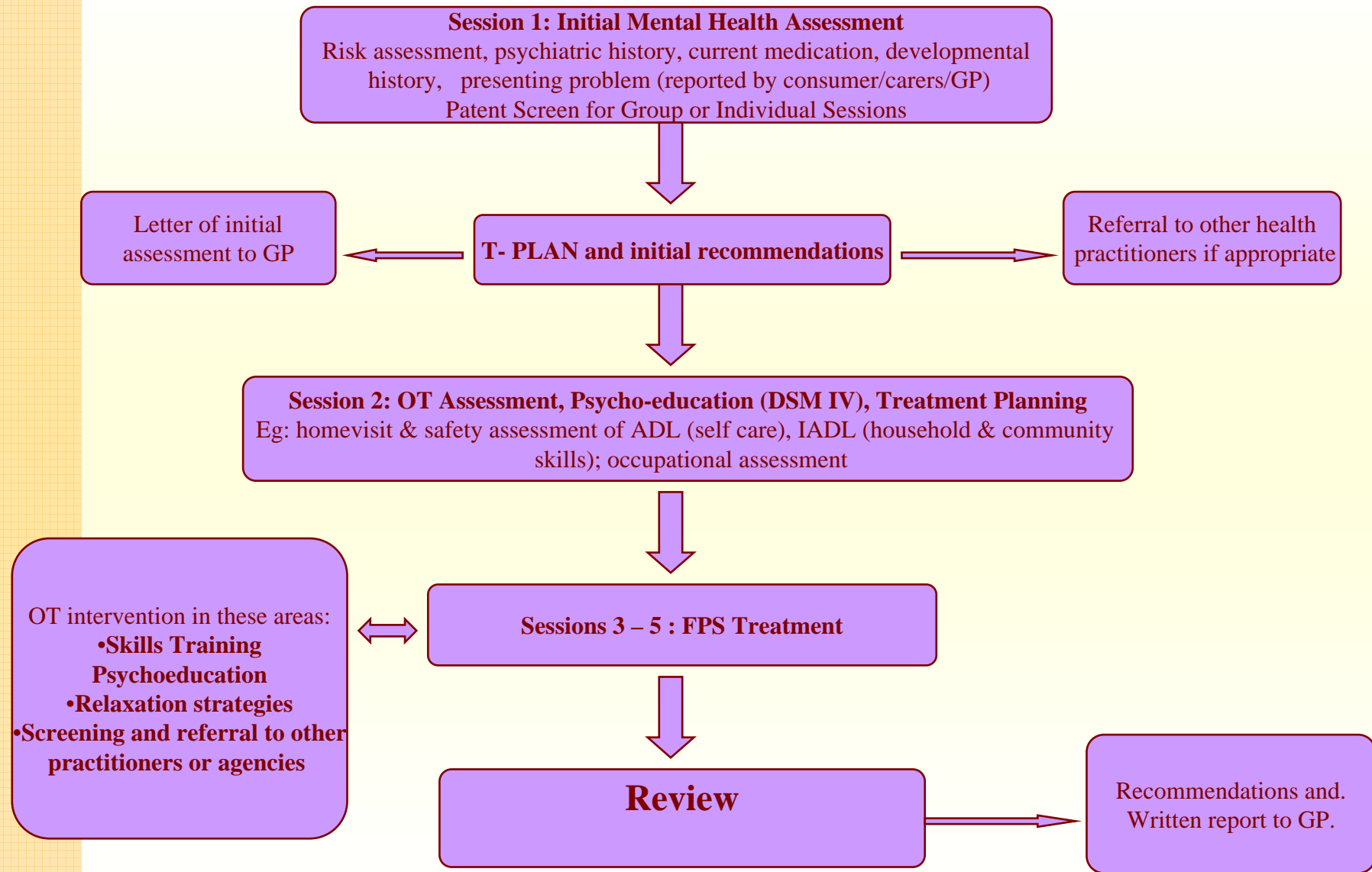
- Accredited Occupational Therapist Program
- Australian Competency Standards for Occupational Therapists in Mental Health[1999],
- Australian Competency Standards for Entry-Level Occupational Therapists [1994}
- Code of Ethics [revised 2001]
- National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce, National Mental Health Education and Training Advisory Group, National Education and Training Initiative, National Mental Health Strategy. September 2002.
- DSMIV Diagnostic Manual

# Credentials

For **FPS Provider eligibility** the requirements for OT are:

1. Registration with Occupational Therapists Board in relevant state and/or membership of OT Australia
2. At least 2 years supervised practice as an OT working in mental health
3. Satisfy all units of the OT Australia Australian Competency Standards for Occupational Therapists in mental Health (1999)
4. Agree to abide by OT Registration Board Code of Ethics 2001.

# Pathway Model for Occupational Therapy Private Practice in FPS



# Occupational Therapy Intervention in FPS

Based on the Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) approved by Medicare, mental Health Occupational Therapists are offer expertise in the following examples:

## **Skills Training – for example:**

- occupational role development
- community living & participation
- vocational skills – jobs in jeopardy, return to work
- structuring daily activities
- problem-solving skills
- communication skills
- goal setting
- activity analysis & graded planning
- Prescription of adaptive equipment

## **Psychoeducation**

- Illness and lifestyle psychoeducation

## **Relaxation strategies**

**Screening and referral to other practitioners or community agencies**

# Case Study - John

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John is a 68 year old man with a diagnosis of clinical depression . He recently retired, resulting in a significant decrease of meaningful life roles and activities.

John has been referred by his GP to a Specialist Mental Health Occupational Therapist to assist in developing meaningful occupational roles.

# Occupational Therapy Intervention for John

- Session 1 – Initial history & mental health assessment with John. Established goals for OT treatment: to improve engagement in leisure activities, to improve skills and confidence in social situations. Referral to psychologist for specific CBT training.
- Session 2 – Standardised occupational functioning assessment of leisure and social roles. Identified strong interest in resuming golf and resuming his grandparenting role. Psychoeducation re: impact of depression on performance/ability.
- Session 3 - Motivational interviewing re: resuming participation in golf. Activity analysis and grading of tasks involved. Goal setting.
- Session 4 – Communication skills training - planning and rehearsing how to initiate conversation & develop positive relationships. Monitoring of leisure goals and progress.
- Session 5 – Application of stress management and relaxation strategies.
- Session 6 – Review outcomes (behavioural outcomes and assessment).

# Occupational Wellbeing

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Everyone deserves a “life worth living”....

- Meaning and purpose
- Making a contribution
- Carry out the things you need to do and want to do in life
- Feel connected in relationships
- Feel stimulated to adapt, develop and grow
- Live in an environment that supports and promotes potential.

# How do I find a registered Mental Health OT ?

OT Qld Association website for:  
2007 Private Mental Health Occupational Therapists  
registered to provide FPS.

<http://www.otqld.org.au>

Available in 2007

***OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY***  
***Skills for Living***



**OT AUSTRALIA**

Australian Association of Occupational Therapists