Teesside HOSPICE

Occupational Therapy

What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational Therapy (OT) helps you improve your quality of life at home, at work and everywhere else. It helps people of all ages improve their ability to perform everyday tasks. Everything is focused on your wellbeing, and your ability to participate in activities or occupations. To do this, we may advise you on different strategies and techniques to complete a task. For example: filling a kettle, picking items from the floor, or ways of enjoying playing with your children. We may suggest the aid of equipment to help you complete certain tasks, or short-cuts when cooking a meal.

Within the Hospice and Palliative care settings, we will focus on your quality of life, what means the most to you and your family, and work alongside you on how this can be achieved.

How can Occupational Therapists Help You?

As part of the whole person (holistic approach), the Occupational Therapist is able to meet with you to discuss any challenges you may be facing with everyday activities, and forge a plan to overcome or reduce these. This plan may include areas of physical, psychological and/or emotional needs. Short- and long-term goals can then be jointly developed.

This usually involves an informal conversation between you and the Occupational Therapist. Your family and friends can also be involved if you want them to be. We will talk about how well you are, and if any symptoms are making life difficult for you. The chat usually involves talking about where you live, your home, and those you live with. This will include any support you have in place from family, friends or carers.

We will specifically look at how you are managing everyday tasks, such as:

- Bathing/showering, washing and dressing
- Mobility to access leisure and hobbies or hospital appointments etc.
- Climbing the stairs
- Provision of wheelchairs
- Making hot and cold drinks, snacks and or meals
- Standing up from the sofa or armchair, toilet or bed
- How you are managing roles, i.e. being a parent, spouse, caring for older relatives, and/or working

As part of this, we can review your home environment and suggest ways to support your return home when this is suitable. This could include:

- Equipment to help you stand up from the sofa if this is too low, or ways to bathe safely
- Minor adaptations, such as rails and second banisters, or half steps can be arranged
- Advice regarding stairlifts
- Strategies to manage fatigue, which is commonplace for many palliative patients
- Information on managing your anxiety
- Pain management
- Sleep
- Life story work
- Quality of life, including maintenance of interests and hobbies

An Example of What This May Look Like

A lady came to our Fatigue Management group and was worried that she struggled to cook meals for herself and husband each day; something she enjoyed doing. They enjoyed home made meals and avoided ready meals. We talked through the foods she prepared i.e. chopping and cutting vegetables whilst standing in the kitchen, lifting heavy pans with water in them, straining these, mashing potatoes etc.

We discussed ways of working smarter by:

- Using one pot to cook stews and soups, either in a pressure cooker, or a slow cooker.
- Making more than is needed for one meal so the remainder can be eaten the next day.
- Asking for help to prepare vegetables or buying fresh ready chopped or frozen to reduce preparation time.
- Using a perching stool to rest on in the kitchen whilst cooking, and asking for help from her husband to carry plates to the table and wash up.

All of these suggestions reduced the amount of energy she used and allowed her to meet up with friends for a coffee, which she also loved doing.

How Can You Get to See an Occupational Therapist?

Ask the Specialist Nurse in Wellbeing, or a Dr or Nurse on the In-patient Unit who will refer you to The OT service. We will then do our best to work alongside you and assist you and your family, as well as help you to enjoy quality time together.



We are regulated by CQC who can ask for information about us and our patients.

www.teessidehospice.org

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