

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Occupational/Physical Therapy Assistant

Class Code: 51116
Pay Grade: GG

A. Purpose:

Conducts therapy developed to improve or maintain the mobility, functioning, comfort and potential of mentally handicapped, mentally ill, injured or disabled individuals in an institutional setting under the supervision of a registered occupational or physical therapist.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The Occupational Therapy Assistant and the Physical Therapy Assistant must be a certified assistant and work under the direct supervision of a registered occupational therapist or physical therapist. The incumbent recommends and assists in the development and monitoring of individual plans and provides active therapy to individuals. The function of occupational therapy is to provide specific activities and adaptive equipment to help people learn skills, enabling them to lead independent lives. The function of physical therapy is to restore or maintain bodily function and mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent disability to those suffering from a disabling injury or disease.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions that may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Provides the documented results of screenings, standardized assessments, and standardized evaluations, after service competencies have been completed, to the supervising registered occupational or physical therapist to facilitate accurate treatment plan input.
 - a. Collaborates with a therapist to complete evaluations and inputs MDS and RAP information for assessment purposes.
 - b. Conducts screenings.
 - c. Conducts or collaborates with a therapist on assessments.
 - d. Assesses screening, assessment, and evaluation results and makes recommendations to the therapist for treatment planning.
 - e. Collaborates with the Occupational Therapist when assigning individuals to groups.
2. Collaborates with Occupational or Physical Therapist for writing and/or refining individual treatment goals to ensure the proper treatment plan is established for each person.
 - a. Attends treatment plan meetings and presents observations on individual's progress.
 - b. When requested, attends meetings with doctors and the person's family.
 - c. Accompanies the doctor on rounds.
 - d. Collaborates with the therapist for goal revision.
3. Prepares training sessions and materials to ensure each assigned person's skill needs are addressed.
 - a. Conducts research for ideas to involve assigned individuals in occupational or physical therapeutic activity commensurate with their progress.
 - b. Prepares session training guides, stimulating and appealing handout and practical exercise materials and events for use by individuals and other therapy assistants assigned to do the session.

- c. Determines how to assess individual learning success and student intern learning methods in order to revise training materials appropriately.
 - d. Orients new and existing staff on therapy techniques and assists student interns with developing purposeful activities for persons.
 - e. Collaborates with a therapist to determine when a person should continue with selected activities, when they can move to advanced activities, or when they need to be returned to lower level activities.
 - f. Canvases local retail outlets and entertainment centers for item cost data.
 - g. Organizes outings in the local community for life skills experiences and recreation.
 - h. Coordinates and obtains individual and staff outing transportation, communication equipment, escorts, security, person's money, and provides advance information to retail outlets and entertainment centers prior to the outing and ensures final clearance is obtained to take the person on the outing.
 - i. Determines which stores and entertainment centers individuals will frequent.
 - j. Briefs attending staff on the outing purpose, security measures, communication means and procedures, and the treatment plan goals to be exercised on the outing.
 - k. Prepares job coaching lessons and materials.
 - l. Revises person's training materials and practical exercise events.
 - m. Revises the student intern manual and internship materials.
4. Engages people in purposeful therapeutic activity to achieve goals identified in the treatment program plan.
- a. Sets up training site and lays out training materials.
 - b. Conducts group sessions targeting the treatment goals for each participant and assessing each person's subsequent learning.
 - c. Conducts one-on-one sessions organized around the person's level of functioning and capability to do more and assesses the subsequent learning.
 - d. Directs the activities of persons at on and off facility site social events providing cues and guidance as necessary.
 - e. Directs the activities of persons at local stores and entertainment centers for life skills training.
5. Monitors and documents the person's responses in group sessions and during one-on-one sessions to ensure that the goals of each individual's treatment plan are being addressed.
- a. Observes, cues when necessary, and documents patient responses to training.
 - b. Informs the occupational or physical therapist about individual performance.
 - c. Discusses an individual's performance and activities with the person and staff.
 - d. Collaborates with an occupational or physical therapist when identifying the need for reassessment or program changes
 - e. Coordinates program modifications with the occupational or physical therapist.
6. Provides input to the occupational or physical therapist on terminating or redirecting services for individuals who have achieved maximum benefit from the services.
- a. Collaborates with an occupational or physical therapist, when determining termination or redirecting services for individuals.
 - b. Assists therapists in preparing a program for implementation in the home or other setting.
 - c. Instructs people and others in activities which support the therapeutic program.
 - d. Recommends adaptations in the peoples' every day environment.
 - e. Identifies and coordinates with community resources.
 - f. Assists in summarizing and documenting the outcome of the services provided.

7. Coordinates with direct care staff to facilitate understanding of possible individual's reactions to treatments and to show the direct care staff how to reinforce information and skills the person has learned.
 - a. Explains how the person is to use adaptive equipment.
 - b. Explains how people may react to information received and activities experienced.
 - c. Receive and process direct care staff observations pertinent to individual's reactions.
 - d. Trains nurses aides on units regarding restorative therapy.
 - e. Observes treatment given by therapy aides and offers assistance when it is needed.
8. Maintains a safe and clean therapeutic work environment to enhance individual learning and ensure the comfort of the individuals.
 - a. Prepares workstations conducive to therapy.
 - b. Maintains site cleanliness and equipment functionality.
 - c. Orders additional supplies and equipment.
9. Assists the occupational or physical therapist in evaluation of the total service program by compiling and analyzing data on the program and recommending changes which will improve services provided.
10. Plans, researches available materials, requests or finds new materials, prepare and conducts in-service education.
11. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Is supervised by a program manager or the Occupational Therapist Coordinator, complies with the work direction of a registered occupational therapist and works with the Occupational Therapy Coordinator. Directs the daily activities of a student intern when directed.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include working with diverse people with varying levels of physical, behavioral and mental limitations; accurately documenting individual progress; developing innovative treatment activities and methods; knowing how to present activities and information to people, and communicating effectively with people and interdisciplinary staff. These actions are challenging because each assigned individual has different levels of functioning and a different capacity to learn and progress resulting in a multifaceted approach to planning, preparing, and delivering training especially to groups.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions made may include interpreting screening results; organizing and scheduling therapy sessions; changing the location of a therapy session; recommendations to an occupational or physical therapist for changes in the treatment plan or for the discontinuation of service; assigning people to groups; the organization, content, and scheduling of therapy sessions; who does and does not attend selected therapy sessions; when a person should attend advanced training, remain at the current level, revert to lesser training level or leave the training; and recommendations for the use of adaptive equipment.

Decisions referred include the implementation of changes in treatment, the use of adaptive or corrective devices, expenditures for materials, problems with students, and the content of formal assigned individual evaluations.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with assigned individuals to provide treatment; nursing staff, physicians, social workers, psychologists, teachers and direct care staff to communicate regarding the assigned individual's therapy.

H. Working Conditions:

Institutional setting with people who may have profound mental and physical handicaps or are mentally ill. The incumbent may be required to lift, transfer and treat people who are often nonverbal or have violent behavior disorders.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- the methods, techniques, and purposes of occupational or physical therapy;
- therapeutic interventions and behavior modification;
- possible injury or hazards associated with specific treatments and the necessary precautionary and remedial measures to avoid injury;
- anatomy and physiology sufficient to position and treat patients effectively.

Ability to:

- establish trust and rapport with patients and staff in a rehabilitation setting;
- accurately observe and record patient behavior and patient progress in an occupational or physical therapy program;
- conduct research;
- prepare and revise training sessions;
- follow instructions;
- recognize contradictions of treatment;
- initiate new and effective treatment.

J. Licenses and Certification:

Occupational Therapy Assistants must be licensed by the South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners as specified in SDCL 36-31. Certified by National Board of Certification for Occupational Therapy.

Physical Therapy Assistants must be licensed by the South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners as specified in SDCL 36-10.