

Developing and maintaining skills for everyday life



As a carer your role is not to do things “ for” the individuals you care for but to do things “ with” them. Your role is to work in partnership with the individual and support their decisions, regarding their care and support them to do as much as possible for themselves. If you provide too much care for an individual they can lose skills, not learn new skills and do not regain skills they have lost. By providing active support and encouraging the individual to participate in their daily living needs you are helping them to develop and maintain their skills for everyday life.

Individuals may have an evaluation to assess their physical skills. This may be carried out by an occupational therapist who will assess how well an individual can function in daily life and participate in their environment. The OT will assess what equipment and adaptations are appropriate which might assist an individual to remain as independent as possible. Occupational therapy has been shown to be successful for the elderly population with many medical conditions and surgical recoveries.

Therapists work with individuals to improve their strength and regain or maintain necessary life skills. Occupational therapists working with the geriatric community counsel families, groups in the community and local governments, to make sure that each sector is doing its part to help the elderly to maintain their independence. Occupational therapy also helps geriatric clients and patients with other activities to assist in diminishing the possibility of social isolation and its unpleasant side effects.

They do this by helping elderly clients and patients continue social activities they know and encouraging them to get involved in new ones as well as showing these folks ways to continue to learn in spite their limitations.

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Occupational therapy also promotes mind stimulating activities. These mental gymnastics give the seniors feelings of self-worth and may help them avoid getting dementia. Encouraging individuals to join local clubs and activities can also help them to maintain and develop their skills.