Occupational Therapy-The Missing Piece in Integrated Primary Care Behavioral Health

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The Integrated Primary Care Behavioral Health Puzzle

Occupational therapists are skilled health practitioners who focus on enabling people to participate in the meaningful and necessary activities of daily life that lead to health and wellbeing. They assess and treat a person’s underlying motor, cognitive, and psychosocial skills by adapting the environment, and/or modifying the task to promote health, independence, and function.

What is Occupational Therapy?

Successes:
1. Positive feedback from providers: Increased knowledge about how to measure and address function
2. Positive feedback from clients: Like the focus on everyday practical problems

Challenges:
1. Reimbursement of OT Services
2. Providers/organizations still trying to build OT referral processes
3. Scope of practice questions

Screening/Assessment:
- Cognition
- Mental Illness
- Motor Concerns
- Developmental Concerns
- Sensory Processing Concerns
- Problem-solving and Executive Functioning Skills
- ADL/IADL functioning
- Substance Use
- Vocational Needs

Intervention:
- Health Management and Occupational Balance
- Developing Healthy Habits and Routines
- Pain Management
- Lifestyle Redesign
- Home Modification
- Assistive/Adaptive Device Training
- Falls Prevention
- Self-Care Training
- Vocational Training

Trainee 1-Rural FQHC
Need: Adults with chronic pain and depression and/or anxiety
OT solution: 3-part screening and brief intervention program to identify and increase non-pharmacological pain management

Trainee 2-Community Based Adult Services
Need: Adults with DD, ID, ABI with behavioral needs and decreased self-care skills
OT Solution: Sensory assessment/interventions to reduce self-harm, self-care training, home modification

Trainee 3-Urban FQHC
Need: Adults with Severe Mental Illness
OT solution: MI screenings, Focus on vocational skills, health leisure, and community engagement

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