



OT's Role in the WTU: Returning Soldiers to Productive Living

Occupational Therapy is a health and rehabilitation profession that makes use of purposeful activity to promote independence in the life areas of work, self-care, and leisure activities.

Occupational Therapy's (OT's) role within a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) is to help Soldiers attain optimal occupational performance and gain a sense of mastery as they transition back to independent, productive living.



The WTU OT promotes the Soldier's return to the role of worker, whether military or civilian. OT practitioners promote, improve, conserve, and restore the skills, abilities and aptitudes of the Warrior in Transition. They help guide Soldiers toward reasonable short and long-term goals that reflect the Soldier's vocational and avocational interests.

Work Reintegration

"Duty" is a Soldier's work and is expected of all Soldiers. To a Warrior in Transition, work or duty assignments are viewed as therapeutic and designed to improve health. The concept of work as a therapeutic medium has been a core concept since the inception of occupational

therapy. Work often provides a sense of security, belonging and self-esteem; it is a role with which all Soldiers can identify. The OT practitioner addresses life skills, occupational performance and potential for work placement. This helps the Soldier to identify occupational goals, identify avenues to reach those goals, and instills the mindset to achieve the stated goals.

OT assessments may include but are not limited to life skills assessments, cognitive assessments, vocational interest surveys, vocational aptitude and career assessments, occupational performance assessments, Warrior functional capacity evaluations and the use of driving or firearm training simulators.

OT practitioners assess limitations that prevent or delay the return to the worker role and provide recommendations for modifications and/or equipment needs.

Life Skills Training

Life skills training and education helps to prepare Soldiers for successful reintegration back to military duty or return to their home and community living.



Utilizing a team approach, the WTU OT staff collaborates with Army, Department of Veterans Affairs, and civilian resources to implement training to meet the Soldier's needs in areas such as:

- Introduction to the healing process
- Goal planning
- Managing stress and energy
- Communication skills
- Concentration skills
- Conflict resolution
- Financial management skills
- Time management
- Leisure skills

Advanced life skills training is provided according to the Soldier's needs including:

- Anger management
- Assertiveness skills
- Specific problem solving techniques
- Relaxation techniques & sleep hygiene
- Pain management & medication safety
- Driving skills

Specific skills training in the area of work readiness includes work habits, values, interests, work skills, and vocational exploration.

**Strengthening Soldiers for a Lifetime...
Army Strong!**



Occupational Therapy's Role in the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU)

Occupational therapy's role in the WTU applies a functional approach to healing through doing, by matching the individual's interests, skills, and abilities with activities that have meaning and purpose, along with the "just right" challenge.

A focus on occupational performance helps to restore confidence and competence.

Life skills components promote functional independence that will enhance future quality of life while preparing the Soldier for a lifetime of productive living.

Participation in work reintegration promotes a sense of mastery, a positive self-identity, and taking responsibility and control over one's future.

Proponency Office for Rehabilitation and Reintegration

U.S. Army

**Office of The Surgeon General
Health Policy & Services**

**5109 Leesburg Pike, Ste. 684
Falls Church, VA 22041
+1.703.681.3051**

www.armymedicine.army.mil/prr

Therapeutic Activities

OT practitioners work closely with the WTU personnel to incorporate specific therapeutic activities into the Soldier's Training Calendar as part of their duty day.

The Soldier's duty day may consist of:

- Activities of daily living (ADLs) such as maintaining a military appearance
- Educational activities including selected life skills training or Soldier task training
- Work / productive activities with duty assignments that match individual interests, skills, and abilities
- Leisure / recreational activities including participation in enjoyable, relaxing activities, games, and sports
- Social participatory activities such as competitive sports, games, ceremonies, or celebrations

For a list of current employment opportunities in U.S. Army Occupational Therapy, visit <http://www.usajobs.com>.



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