

Activities of Daily Living: Using Telehealth and Assistive Technology

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What is Occupational Therapy?

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) defines OT as:

“The therapeutic use of everyday life occupations with persons, groups, or populations (clients) to support occupational performance and participation”

World Federation of Occupational Therapists defines occupational therapy as:

“Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, **or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.**”

Promo Video - Spalding University



What are Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)?

Activities of Daily Living are defined as... everyday activities oriented toward taking care of one's own body and completed on a routine basis

- Bathing, showering
- Toileting and toilet hygiene
- Dressing
- Eating and swallowing
- Feeding
- Functional mobility
- Personal hygiene and grooming
- Sexual activity

Why do ADLs matter?

- An inability to independently complete ADLs can limit participation in other meaningful activities, as well as lead to an overall decrease in quality of life
- Occupational therapists specialize in assisting individuals with ADL completion and independence in order to *improve* quality of life - it is what we do best

What is telehealth?

- Application of evaluative, consultative, preventative, and therapeutic services delivered through information and communication technology (AOTA, 2018)
- Telehealth is typically conducted through the use of a laptop or smartphone that has video conferencing abilities.
- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) does not allow telehealth to occur via Facetime
- Requires internet connection

How can telehealth be effective?

- Allows for qualified therapists to administer occupational therapy services regardless of their proximity to client
- For immunocompromised individuals, this can be ideal for limiting exposure to various contagious diseases, like COVID-19
- With proper instruction and simple preparedness strategies, telehealth sessions can be extremely effective as we can have a firsthand look at how one interacts with their environment

What assistive technology would an OT recommend for ADL independence?

- **Assistive technology:** any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities
- Can be either low or high tech
- **Low tech option:** using a magnifier to assist with reading morning medication labels for the visually impaired (\$6 - Walgreens)
- **High tech option:** using an automated medication dispenser (\$70 - Amazon)

Amazon Alexa

- Voice operated smart speaker
- Requires wi-fi and an amazon account
- Can set daily reminders, set timers
- Can make phone calls (requires connection with smart phone)
- Can change temperature in your home (requires smart thermostat)
- Can lock/unlock doors (requires smart lock)



Assistive Technology Con't...

- App: Seeing AI (free)
 - Can assist with color identification of clothing and can speak text
- Reacher (\$10 - Amazon)
- Sock aid/shoe horn (\$9-15 - Amazon)
- Timed medication dispenser (\$16+ - Amazon)
- Talking alarm clock (\$45+ - Amazon)
- One handed can opener (\$14+ - Amazon)
- Liquid level indicator (\$10-\$24 - Amazon)
- Jitterbug phone (\$100 + - Lively.com)

Mock Telehealth Session



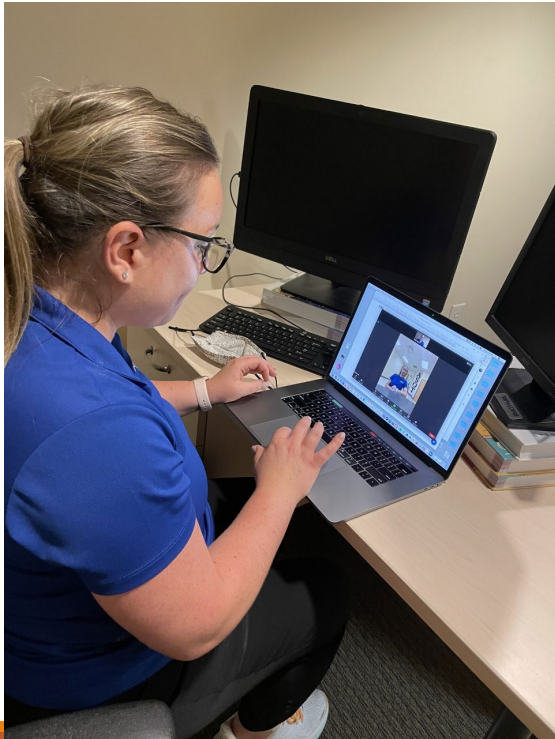
Using Telehealth and AT

- The client has to be an appropriate candidate for telehealth
 - Have the ability to troubleshoot technical issues
- Using software that is HIPAA compliant
 - Doxy.me, Simple Practice, Zoom, GoToMeeting
 - Must be installed on both the client and professionals devices
- Provide the client with information about the session 24-48 hours before
- Send a reminder 1 hour before the session

Environmental Considerations: Mock Session



Mock Session Continued



Challenges without AT in telehealth



Recommendations for AT Telehealth Session



AT in the mock telehealth session



Questions?

References

- Assistive Technology Industry Association. (n.d.). *What is AT?* <https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/what-is-at/#what-is-assistive-technology>
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