



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Occupational Therapist	
Position Number(s)	Community	Division/Region(s)
48-6434	Yellowknife	Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Services / Yellowknife Region

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Occupational Therapist (OT) will be required to provide diagnostic, intervention and referral services to patients of the Occupational Therapy Department in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Rules of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) and the philosophy and strategic priorities of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Service Authority (NTHSSA) to ensure patients realize and maintain maximum functioning and independence within efficient publicly funded services.

## SCOPE

NTHSSA is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłı̄ch̄o regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-aboriginals. Health and social services include the full range of primary, secondary, and tertiary health services and social services including family services, protection services, care placements, mental health, addictions, and developmental activities, delivered by more than 1,400 health and social services staff.

While the Tłı̄ch̄o Community Services Agency (TCSA) and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency (HRHSSA) operate under separate boards, NTHSSA will set clinical standards, procedures, guidelines, and monitoring for the entire NWT. Service Agreements will be established with these boards to identify performance requirements and adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines, and policies as established by NTHSSA.

NTHSSA administers health and social services to the residents of the Yellowknife Region in the NWT. NTHSSA directly and contractually employs over 300 staff who deliver these services in

Yellowknife, Ft. Resolution, Lutselk'e, N'dilo, and Dettah for the Yellowknife Region. The NTHSSA provides and supports the delivery of services to adults, children, and seniors on an inpatient, outpatient, and outreach basis at multiple sites across the city of Yellowknife and the Communities of Lutselk'e, N'dilo, Dettah, and Ft. Resolution. These services include community-based social services, a public health clinic, primary care services, rehabilitation services, home and community care services, and long-term care/extended care services.

The legacies of colonization and residential schools have impacted Indigenous health outcomes and the way health and social services are delivered and accessed. The incumbent is required to always honor and promote a culturally safe environment. Practicing from a trauma informed care perspective is expected and the position requires that interaction with clients and families is tactful, respectful, and humble.

There are four regional rehabilitation teams located in Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, and Yellowknife. Rehabilitation services consist of audiology, occupational therapy (OT), physiotherapy (PT) and speech language pathology (SLP). All teams provide PT, OT and SLP services; the Yellowknife and Inuvik teams provide audiology services. Each regional team is responsible for delivering services within the community where they are located as well as other smaller communities. The provision of regional services is achieved using various methods of delivery including community travel clinics, telehealth, telephone, etc. Child Development Teams (CDT) are located within the Yellowknife and Inuvik rehabilitation teams. Additionally, a territorial Youth Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Diagnostic and Family/Community Support program is embedded in the Yellowknife CDT.

Reporting directly to the Territorial Manager, Occupational Therapy the incumbent is one of a team of Occupational Therapists who independently manage their own caseload and provide diagnostic, intervention, treatment, preventative, educational, counseling and referral services for patients whose health and function is affected by developmental, cognitive, physical, and mental health challenges. Services are provided on an in-patient, out-patient, community, and school basis. The Occupational Therapy unit consists of the Territorial Manager, OT; OTs (pediatric and adult); Rehabilitation Assistants; OT Aides; and a Program Administrative Assistant.

The OT department has approximately 4,000 encounters a year (approximately 3 to 7 encounters per Therapist per day). Physicians, community health nurses, schools (for school-based services) and patients refer to Occupational Therapy. The incumbent will perform clinical and where applicable standardized assessment and provide direct and indirect care based on a best practices approach aimed at positive outcomes for Occupational Therapy intervention (e.g., assessment, diagnosis, treatment, selection/ordering equipment etc.). The incumbent acts as an educational resource and monitors the delivery of treatment delegated to clients, family, health care, early childhood and education providers in various locations that include but are not limited to; the hospital, community health centers, residential care facilities, schools/day care centers and the patient's workplace or home. The incumbent will research, design, and implement programs, educational material and deliver workshops on topics related to occupational therapy. Unlike Occupational Therapists in southern institutions the incumbent must have advanced knowledge in all areas of occupational therapy related to their service as

opposed to a specialization in one area. The incumbent may also cover other services on a short-term basis and is expected to have entry level knowledge of those services.

The incumbent will work with patients who have been affected by physical illness or injury, congenital or developmental delays, mental illness, the aging process and/or psychosocial challenges. The focus of the assessment, diagnosis and intervention is on performance in the areas of self-care/personal care (e.g., getting dressed, bathing, and eating), productivity (e.g., paid, or unpaid work, household and school) and leisure (e.g., hobbies, sports, social activities). The focus of the therapy is to assist the individuals in resolving the impact of disease/injury, developing skills, restoring function and independence, and maintaining ability to function effectively in home, school, social and professional situations as well as improving quality of life. This often requires the application of therapeutic processes aimed at enhancing physical or cognitive components.

The incumbent will evaluate the patient's needs based on presenting impairment, disability and/or handicap and design and prescribe a treatment plan to meet those needs. The treatment plan will include but not be limited to; identifying additional required resources (both human and material) and educational needs, cost effective intervention strategies and discharge planning. The incumbent may recommend further diagnostic investigation or cross referral to other health care providers (e.g., medical specialist, physiotherapist, social workers, audiologists, speech language pathologists, etc.).

In addition, the incumbent may provide care by assisting the client to learn modified approaches to activities of daily living (e.g. joint protection techniques for clients with arthritis, positioning that reduces tone), fabricating, prescribing or adapting orthoses, assistive devices or mobility enhancers (e.g. splint, special seating for a child to attend school or an adult to function), or recommending changes to their environment (e.g. modifications to facilitate return to work or learning in a classroom).

As an Occupational Therapist employed by NTHSSA the incumbent also provides functional expertise and direction to other health care providers on the delivery of occupational therapy.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Provides direct care to children and adults with a wide variety of conditions requiring occupational therapy using a problem-solving approach and in accordance with the standards, guidelines, best practice, and scope of occupational therapy to facilitate individualized patient care. The Occupational Therapist:**

- Evaluates the patients' need for occupational therapy service.
- Assesses, prescribes, implements, documents, and evaluates care and modifies as necessary to ensure a coordinated, holistic and client centered approach to patient care,
- Assists patients in realizing and maintaining maximum healthy functioning and independence,
- Advocates for the dignity and self-respect of patients.

- Advocates for patients with other agencies (e.g., WSCC, Income Support, NIHB, etc.) so that needs relating to the impairment are met (e.g., income, equipment, etc.).
  - Promotes the autonomy of patients and helps them express their health needs and values to obtain appropriate information and services.
  - Safeguards the trust of patients that information learned in the context of a professional relationship is shared outside the health care team only with the patient's permission or as legally required.
  - Applies and promotes principles of equity and fairness to assist patients in receiving unbiased treatment and a share of health services and resources proportionate to their needs.
  - Documents impact of intervention through outcome measures.
  - Acts in a manner consistent with professional responsibilities and standards of practice.
  - Provides some follow-up and consultative services through tele-health.
- 2. The Occupational Therapist develops, modifies, coordinates, and facilitates education/teaching based on the needs of the patient, families, caregivers, and other stakeholders.**
- Uses a holistic approach to facilitate individual learning of patients and, where applicable, their families, caregivers, or other stakeholders.
  - Assesses the patient's knowledge of their health, disease process and learning needs.
  - Educates and counsel clients, caregivers, and service providers on the nature of impairment (via community education, health promotion, public education material and workshops delivered in the community, etc.).
  - Develops, revises, and evaluates, on an ongoing basis, educational resources necessary to support patients, families, caregivers, and stakeholders.
  - Aids in the coordination of the transfer or discharge of patients. This includes explaining and ensuring that the patient understands the discharge plan (established by the Health Care Team for the patient's care and treatment) as it relates to their daily living needs.
- 3. Ensures the appropriate maintenance of OT equipment needed for patient care.**
- Troubleshoots and ensures timely and appropriate maintenance and repairs on therapeutic equipment in areas that include but are not limited to the clinical, school, work, residential and home environments.
  - Ensures that patient health and safety is protected using standard precautions and following policies and procedures on cleaning of equipment.
- 4. Advocates practice environments that have the organizational and resource allocations necessary for safe, competent, and ethical care.**
- Recognizes the importance of cultural safety and cultural diversity in working with clients and their support systems.
  - Collaborates with physicians, nurses, and other members of the health care team to advocate health care environments that are conducive to ethical practice and to the health and well-being of patients and others in the setting.
  - Provides coaching and leadership to peers, students, and other members of the health care team to develop skill levels necessary to achieve the standard of care.

- Provides consultation and professional opinion on diagnosis, prognosis and appropriate treatment and follow-up of clients to medical specialists, family physicians, community nurses and other health care professionals.
  - Provides consultation and professional advice to teachers, early intervention workers, and other community service providers about optimal programming to best serve patients with special needs in an inclusive environment.
  - Provides orientation of new employees to service specific programs and mandate,
  - Refers client to other health/service providers when appropriate.
  - Provides information and recommendations on capital expenditures, and department procedures.
  - Participates in committees, task teams, and research projects as required.
- 5. The Occupational Therapist arranges travel clinics to provide care to residents of the smaller communities within the NWT and Nunavut (Kitikmeot Region).**
- Coordinates community clinics and collaborates with healthcare, school, and other stakeholder staff to determine schedule, caseload, services, and follow-up.
  - Provides aftercare programs for community clients.
  - Determines need for patient to undergo intensive therapy in Yellowknife and coordinates arrangements.
  - Provides necessary training to the client, family, nurses, and other health care staff regarding client programming.
  - Monitors delivery of therapeutic services delegated to community health care staff.
- 6. Workplace Health and Safety: employees of the Authority are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful workplace for employees and patients/clients. Building a safe and respectful workplace is everyone's responsibility.**
- All employees and contractors have a professional and personal responsibility to perform their duties to health and safety regulations, standards, practices and procedures.
  - All stakeholders (management, staff, UNW, and Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC)) need to ensure our Workplace Health and Safety Committee works effectively, with a shared purpose of continuous quality improvement in health and safety.
  - All Managers and Supervisors play an active role in workplace health and safety through their daily. management: identifying prevention opportunities, ensuring staff are trained in Risk Monitor Pro, investigating potential risk and accidents, and applying timely corrective measures.
  - A healthy workplace, where employees can provide quality service under safe conditions, is the right thing to do and makes good business sense.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

Approximately 50% of the incumbent's day will be spent bending and standing in awkward positions providing physically demanding services (e.g., repetitive, and forceful use of hands) to clients while providing assessment or care. The incumbent transfers patients who require assistance and moves and lifts children and heavy therapeutic equipment during service provision. This often requires lifting equipment above shoulder height. While visiting smaller communities the incumbent will need to travel with heavy baggage that holds testing equipment (e.g., diagnostic resources, therapeutic equipment, etc.).

### **Environmental Conditions**

During their day an incumbent may be exposed to communicable diseases, blood and body fluid that can result in potential health risk to the incumbent. While fabricating or adapting orthotic devices there may be dust from sanding as well as fumes from glue and solvents. During home visits the incumbent may be exposed to unsanitary conditions, cigarette smoke and loud noises (e.g., crying baby).

### **Sensory Demands**

The incumbent will be required to use the combined senses of touch, sight and hearing during assessment and provision of care in a variety of settings that vary from controlled (e.g., hospital) to uncontrolled (e.g., patient's home). Uncontrolled settings may be distracting for both the incumbent and the patient (noise level, visual commotion, etc.).

The Occupational Therapist must be constantly aware (50% of the workday) of patients' physical and emotional needs (mood, hygiene, etc.). Patients may be unable to request assistance when required, therefore the incumbent must maintain alertness at all times.

### **Mental Demands**

The Occupational Therapist has the opportunity to develop relationships with the clients of the Rehabilitation Services Department. The Occupational Therapist is expected to remain calm, controlled, and professional, regardless of the situation and demonstrate compassionate care to the client, family, and other members of the health care team.

The incumbent will travel to communities approximately 5 to 30 days per year depending on their service allocation, which may cause stress on the incumbent's family and social life.

There is uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work, especially in uncontrolled settings (e.g., home visits). There is legitimate concern about risk of verbal or physical assault and unknown and unpredictable situations (e.g., patients or family members under the influence of alcohol).

In addition, within the health care setting there can be significant lack of control over the work pace, with frequent interruptions that may lead to mental fatigue or stress.

The Occupational Therapist is required to be motivated and innovative in the area of continuing education and practice to encourage the professional growth of self and others.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of cognitive, physical, and functional development and impairment related to the scope of occupational therapy including anatomy, physiology, and pathology in a variety of age groups.
- Knowledge of biological, physical, behavioral, and mental health sciences in order to recognize, interpret and prioritize findings and determine and implement a plan of action based on accepted standards of practice and best practices.
- Knowledge of, and an ability to network, resources within and outside the Rehabilitation Department (e.g., Social Services, WSCC, Community Health Nurses, Home Care, Housing Corporation, Program Support teachers, etc.) in order to ensure support of patients and their families (e.g., during discharge planning, entry into kindergarten).
- Knowledge of, and ability to operate, a desk top computer in order to send and receive electronic mail and conduct research over the Internet.
- Knowledge of, and ability to operate, word processing applications (e.g., Microsoft Word) in the completion of reports, training materials and presentations.
- An ability to apply therapeutic processes (assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation) to ensure that the patients' physical, emotional, psychosocial, educational, and day-to-day living needs are met.
- An ability to perform clinical and standardized assessment using a variety of assessments (e.g., Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development, Kohlman Evaluation of Living Skills, Rivermead Behavioral Memory Test, etc.).
- An ability to fabricate or select orthoses and/or assistive devices/tools (including but not limited to custom splints, orthotics, wheelchairs/seating components, aids to daily living, etc.) required to heal injured body parts or improve daily functioning.
- An ability to educate patients, and where applicable their families/caregivers and other health care professionals on appropriate self-care methods and techniques.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

### **Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

This level of knowledge is typically acquired through the successful completion of a master's degree in Occupational Therapy.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Occupational Therapists must have provisional professional licensure in any Canadian province and full licensure within six months of hire. In most cases, this will include

graduating from a Canadian or other recognized Occupational Therapy Program and successful completion of the certification exam within a reasonable time frame. OTs must also be practicing members of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT).

- Proof of Immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required

NTHSSA has a number of certifications that are required upon hire, depending on the area where the employee works, including but not limited to: Indigenous Cultural Awareness, Biohazardous Waste, Biosafety and Biosecurity, Infection Control, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and others directly related to the incumbent's scope of practice.

**Position Security** (check one)

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

**French Language** (check one if applicable)

- French required (must identify required level below)  
Level required for this Designated Position is:  
ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION  
Basic (B)  Intermediate (I)  Advanced (A)   
READING COMPREHENSION:  
Basic (B)  Intermediate (I)  Advanced (A)   
WRITING SKILLS:  
Basic (B)  Intermediate (I)  Advanced (A)
- French preferred

**Indigenous Language:**

- Required
- Preferred