



Occupational Therapy

June 2026

The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice in Occupational Therapy. Part of this bulletin draws on content created by Manchester University NHS FT and University Hospitals Dorset NHS Trust

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Evidence Summary and Systematic Reviews

1. Bridging the Gap: A Narrative Review of the Essential Role of Occupational Therapists in Sensory Stimulation for Comatose Traumatic Brain Injury Patients

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Alqasem, Ahmad and Odeh, Aya

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Cureus 18(5)

Source: <https://www.cureus.com/articles/475192-bridging-the-gap-a-narrative-review-of-the-essential-role-of-occupational-therapists-in-sensory-stimulation-for-comatose-traumatic-brain-injury-patients#!/>

2. Nonpharmacological Sleep Interventions for Children With Angelman Syndrome: A Scoping Review

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Barrett, Joseph and Lane, Shelly J.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: The American Journal of Occupational Therapy 80(4), pp. 8004205070

Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42102304/>

3. Characterisation and non-pharmacological treatment of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome in under-18-year-olds: a scoping review

Item Type: Journal Article



Authors: Budhraj, Mahira;Purvis, Ryan;Tang, Katrina and Lewis, Jennifer

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: European Journal of Pediatrics 185(6), pp. 364

Source: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00431-026-07027-w>

4. Taking Center Stage: Centering the Caregivers of Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Their Support: A Literature Review

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Dahl-Colaw, Jessica

Publication Date: 2026

Source: https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_therapies_theses/115/

5. Occupational Exoskeletons as a Technological Solution for Musculoskeletal Disorders: A Systematic Review of Barriers and Facilitators for Sustainable Workplace Integration

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: van Laar, D. M.;Bieleman, H. J.;Rijnders, CSI;Saakes, D. P.;Reneman, M. F. and Roossien, C. C.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation , pp. 1–22

Source: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10926-026-10397-5>

6. Preschool Hand Function Assessment Instruments: A Scoping Review With Targeted Analysis of Performance-Based Instruments

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Visser, Marieta;Smith, Robyn and Casteleijn, Daleen

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Occupational Therapy International 2026(1), pp. 4114099

Source: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1155/oti/4114099>

7. Sensory processing and its relevance to occupational performance: a systematic review

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: GIBELLO RUFO, ALICIA;Garrido-Ardila, Elisa Maria;Jimenez-Palomares, Maria;Cilleros-Sánchez, Carmen;González-Sánchez, Blanca and RODRIGUEZ MANSILLA, JUAN

Publication Date:



Journal: Frontiers in Psychology 17, pp. 1844400

Source: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1844400/full>

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Published Research

1. **Bridging the Gap: A Narrative Review of the Essential Role of Occupational Therapists in Sensory Stimulation for Comatose Traumatic Brain Injury Patients**

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Alqasem, Ahmad and Odeh, Aya

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Cureus 18(5)

Source: <https://www.cureus.com/articles/475192-bridging-the-gap-a-narrative-review-of-the-essential-role-of-occupational-therapists-in-sensory-stimulation-for-comatose-traumatic-brain-injury-patients>

2. **Home-Based Occupational Therapy Early Intervention Programs in Children with Down Syndrome: A Randomized Clinical Trial**

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Argueta Dheming, K. G.;Oliveira Silva, L.;da Silva, M. C. V.;Moraes Silva Gomes, C.;Silva Zuttin Cavalcante, F.;Fernanda, V. P. and Magalhães, R. C.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics , pp. 1–15

Abstract: AbstractAimsMethodsResultsConclusionTo investigate the effectiveness of combining home-based programs with early intervention (EI) as an occupational therapy strategy for children with Down Syndrome.A six-month longitudinal pilot study was conducted with 30 children with DS aged 0-3 years, recruited from an early intervention institute in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Participants were allocated to a control group (EI only) or an experimental group (EI plus home-based programs grounded in Family-Centered Practice (FCP)). Outcomes were assessed at baseline and post-intervention using the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM), the Pediatric Evaluation of Disability Inventory (PEDI), and the Affordances in the Home Environment for Motor Development (AHEMD).Both groups demonstrated statistically significant improvements from pre- to post-intervention ($p < 0.001$). However, the experimental group showed moderate effect sizes (Hedges' g) in occupational performance (0.61), satisfaction (0.50), and self-care (0.56), while the remaining outcomes presented small effects. No significant between-group differences were observed in environmental affordances.The integration of home-based programs grounded in FCP into early intervention was



associated with greater improvements in occupational performance, caregiver satisfaction, and self-care skills in young children with Down Syndrome. These findings support home-based programs as a feasible and effective complementary occupational therapy approach within early intervention services.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1080/01942638.2026.2667359>

URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=82452ab8-983e-3f10-b44c-141a6ac5555e>

3. Increasing Occupational Therapy's Visibility in College Sports Medicine in Student-athletes with Season-ending Injuries

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Buzzy, Mickaela H. and Fischer-Camara, Bonnie

Publication Date: 2026

Source: https://orb.binghamton.edu/ppotd_capstone/4/

4. Implementation of an Occupational Therapy-Based Intervention Program for Prediabetic/Diabetic Individuals from Underserved Populations

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Coleman, Joshua

Publication Date: 2026

Source: <https://twu-ir.tdl.org/items/6181797b-4935-4973-b9dc-13870f0320b6>

5. Educating Occupational Therapy Students and Supporting Caregivers on Textured Hair Care and Grooming

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Goodwin, Brianna

Publication Date: 2026

Source: <https://twu-ir.tdl.org/items/f2946290-2b31-4d00-a38e-abdcd8de2da8>

6. Occupational Therapy for Caregiver Support and General Clinical Practice in Rural Settings

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Handel, Madysen M.



Publication Date: 2026

Source: https://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar.rfw?q=info:V9Pu_O8gtDAJ:scholar.google.com/&output=citation&scisdr=Clgf7QVVEPC2t83sfWg:AFyMTJUAAAAAagrqZWnjZP48JGNp_1804B4KRZ8&scisig=AFyMTJUAAAAAagrqZTRKQ0zjFcVeL8yW9w1nV8w&scisf=1&ct=citation&cd=0&hl=en

7. **Examining the Benefits of Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Trauma Informed Yoga for Survivors of Human Trafficking by Occupational Therapists: A Systematic Review**

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Hopkins, Grace;Amonette, Nancy;Stidham, Linda Kate;Hansen, Alison;Aranha, Karen and Hilton, Claudia

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Occupational Therapy in Health Care , pp. 1–28

Abstract: Abstract Human trafficking (HT) is a violation of human rights causing injuries that often result in deep mental and physical scars on survivors with a lifelong deleterious impact on engagement in all occupations and overall health. A lack of attention to these needs results in chronic disorders that cause occupational injustice and imbalance, lifelong dependence on healthcare, and early mortality. In occupational therapy, adjunctive evidence-based interventions are needed to provide holistic care to support recovery for these individuals. Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) and the mindfulness approach of trauma-informed yoga (TIY) are two interventions used with this population to alleviate post-trauma symptoms; however, their underlying mechanism to aid with recovery and their overall outcomes vary. The objective is to examine the effectiveness of trauma-focused interventions, TF-CBT and TIY, to holistically address the needs of HT survivors specifically for occupational therapy practice. Data sources are Ovid(Medline), CINAHL, and PsycINFO databases. The inclusion criteria were: (i) human participants, (ii) populations with trafficking trauma, (iii) interventions TF-CBT and/or TIY, (iv) published between 2009 and 2024, and (v) published in English. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were used. The outcomes of these studies indicate that TF-CBT has moderate strength quantitative evidence and TIY evidence is considered weak. However, quality assessment of the Level 6 TIY studies indicates high qualitative value, with findings that were transparent, transferable, and generalizable to larger populations. TF-CBT and/or TIY are evidence-based interventions that can be used as adjunctive therapies, either administered by the occupational therapists or referred to specialists trained in these modalities, to mitigate trauma-related symptoms. When used together, they can be complementary and have a more holistic effect. However, higher level quantitative and mixed-methods studies using more rigorous methodologies are needed to strengthen the evidence.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1080/07380577.2026.2658599>

URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=23a9e51a-c575-36af-aa9b->



3552bbf3d870

8. Thrive in nature: a neuroaffirming nature-based occupational therapy program for autistic adults

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Kara, Shannon

Publication Date: 2026

Source: <https://open.bu.edu/items/b9d5604f-fc5b-4656-9f22-9b8bd91f3829>

9. Occupational Therapy Practitioners' Perceptions of the Impact of DEI Training on Clinical Practice

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Lowery, L.;Wilbert, S.;Hampton, E.;Leynes, A.;Stubbs, M. and Winston, A.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: J Rehab Pract Res 7(1), pp. 201

Source: <https://gexinonline.com/uploads/articles/article-jrpr-201.pdf>

10. Preparing for Change: Supporting Dementia Transitions Through Occupational Therapy and Caregiver Education

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Mooney, Kelly Ann

Publication Date: 2026

Source: https://scholars.unh.edu/otd_capstones/2/

11. Connecting Minds and Bodies: Advancing Mental Health Support Through Occupational Therapy in Acute Care Environments

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Morrison, Sarah

Publication Date: 2026

Source: https://scholars.unh.edu/otd_capstones/6/

12. Pornography: What Occupational Therapists Need to Know for Clinical Practice

Item Type: Journal Article



Authors: Rothman, Emily F. and Ellis, Kathryn M.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: The American Journal of Occupational Therapy 80(4), pp. 8004347020

Source: <https://research.ota.org/ajot/article/80/4/8004347020/28608>

13. Burnout Prevention Among Caregivers in End-of-Life Care: Application of the Occupational Therapy Lens

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Tanzler, Jessica

Publication Date: 2026

Source: <https://scholarworks.indianapolis.iu.edu/items/382170b3-c6a9-435e-aba2-e458d8937275>

14. Role of Occupational Therapy in Enhancing Academic Performance in Special Education

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Wankhade, Nisha;Solanki, Shailesh;Shinde, Sandeep;Sundareswaran, Deepa;Parmanova, Nigora;Gulandom, Sagdullayeva and Chavan, Gajanan

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: International Journal of Special Education 41(1s), pp. 240–255

Source: <https://www.internationalped.com/index.php/ijse/article/view/2501>

15. Development and validation of a knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) questionnaire related to occupational therapy for sleep management in neurological conditions among occupational therapist - NIL

Item Type: Generic

Author: Mrs, Shalini Quadros

Publication Date: 2025a

Aathma S A.

Source: International Clinical Trials Registry Platform ICTRP; EBSCOhost,

URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=a3bbd656-c80a-3b24-a4d5-d78fc198b6ce>

17. Enhancing Occupational Therapy Students' Education in Animal-Assisted Therapy: Students' Experience

Item Type: Journal Article

Authors: Hill, Jessica;Mensforth, Sophie;Waldby, Lucy;Fleming, Jennifer;Quinlan, Teresa and Driscoll, Carlie



Publication Date: 2024

Journal: People & Animals: The International Journal of Research & Practice (PAIJ) 7(1), pp. 1–15

Abstract: Animal-assisted therapy has been gaining increased attention in occupational therapy practice and research. Yet the topic remains missing from university curricula at an international level. The aim of this study was to describe how animal-assisted therapy might be introduced to occupational therapy curricula and explore the experience of students who were able to implement their knowledge within a student-led clinic. Nine occupational therapy students engaged in individual semistructured interviews, allowing them to describe their experience participating in a student-led canine-assisted therapy clinic. Transcripts were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. Four themes emerged describing the students' experience: outside my comfort zone, a safe learning environment, opening minds to possibilities by linking theory to practice, and future recommendations. Students explained that they were initially met with a challenge as canine-assisted therapy was an area of practice in which they had limited previous experience. However, they noted that the safe learning environment created by the clinic staff, their peers, and their clients' parents supported their confidence to overcome these challenges and embrace the unique learning experience. Students identified that they gained a deeper understanding of the occupational therapy profession through this experience. Finally, while describing an overall positive experience, students identified that improvements could be made to further support student learning. To support the increasing involvement of occupational therapists in animal-assisted therapy, methods to establish appropriate education and training are required. Introducing animal-assisted therapy to university curricula as an area of occupational therapy practice, as well as within student-led clinics might be a potential way in which this could be achieved.

URL: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=a98f8eec-32fc-3241-9a25-2b737bd15817>

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Professional Development/ Reports/News

1. RCOT

Ruddock, K. (2026) *Seeing the whole picture: what my dual lens taught me about Black inclusion in occupational therapy*. Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 15 May. Available at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/latest-news/seeing-whole-picture-what-my-dual-lens-taught-me-about-black-inclusion-occupational-therapy> (Accessed: 18 May 2026). [rcot.co.uk]

2. Local Government Association report

Local Government Association (2026) *Health check national summary for occupational therapists 2026*. 22 April. Available at: <https://www2.local.gov.uk/publications/health-check->



[national-summary-occupational-therapists-2026](#) (Accessed: 18 May 2026).

[\[www2.local.gov.uk\]](http://www2.local.gov.uk)

3. RCOT

Robin, B. (2026) *Sharing my occupational identity*. Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 13 May. Available at: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/latest-news/sharing-my-occupational-identity> (Accessed: 18 May 2026)