



An Emerging Practice: Occupational Therapy's Singular Contribution to Housing First

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Objectives

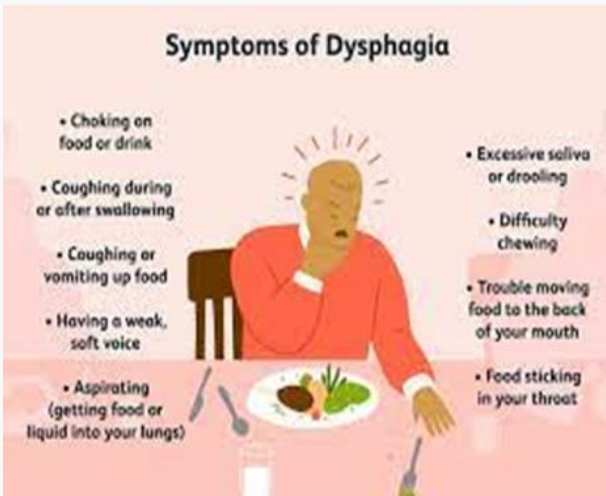
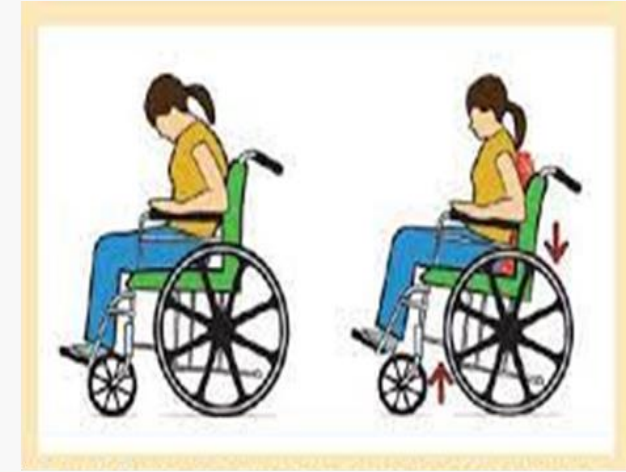
At this end of this presentation, attendees will be able to:

- Define occupational therapy and its unique role in supporting individuals in permanent supportive housing on a micro, meso, and macro level
- Identify 3 ways an occupational therapist might support a new resident struggling to adjust to living indoors
- Identify 3 instances in which an occupational therapy evaluation might become necessary for a longterm resident



What is Occupational Therapy?

Occupational therapists are holistic healthcare practitioners who facilitate safe, functional participation in daily activities that clients want or need to do.



Why is OT so important in PSH?

Systemic barriers to accessing appropriate levels of care (de facto aging in place)

Transition from unhoused to housed can also be traumatic

Need for OT

Often lacking sense of identity, self-worth, and meaningful occupation

The three primary reasons for substance use (pain, boredom, loneliness)

Frailty of Older Adults in PSH

Per 2017 study interviewing 237 adults in Los Angeles PSH (median age 58):

ADL
impairment:
42%

IADL
impairment:
69%

Urinary
incontinence:
40%

Mobility
impairment: 51%

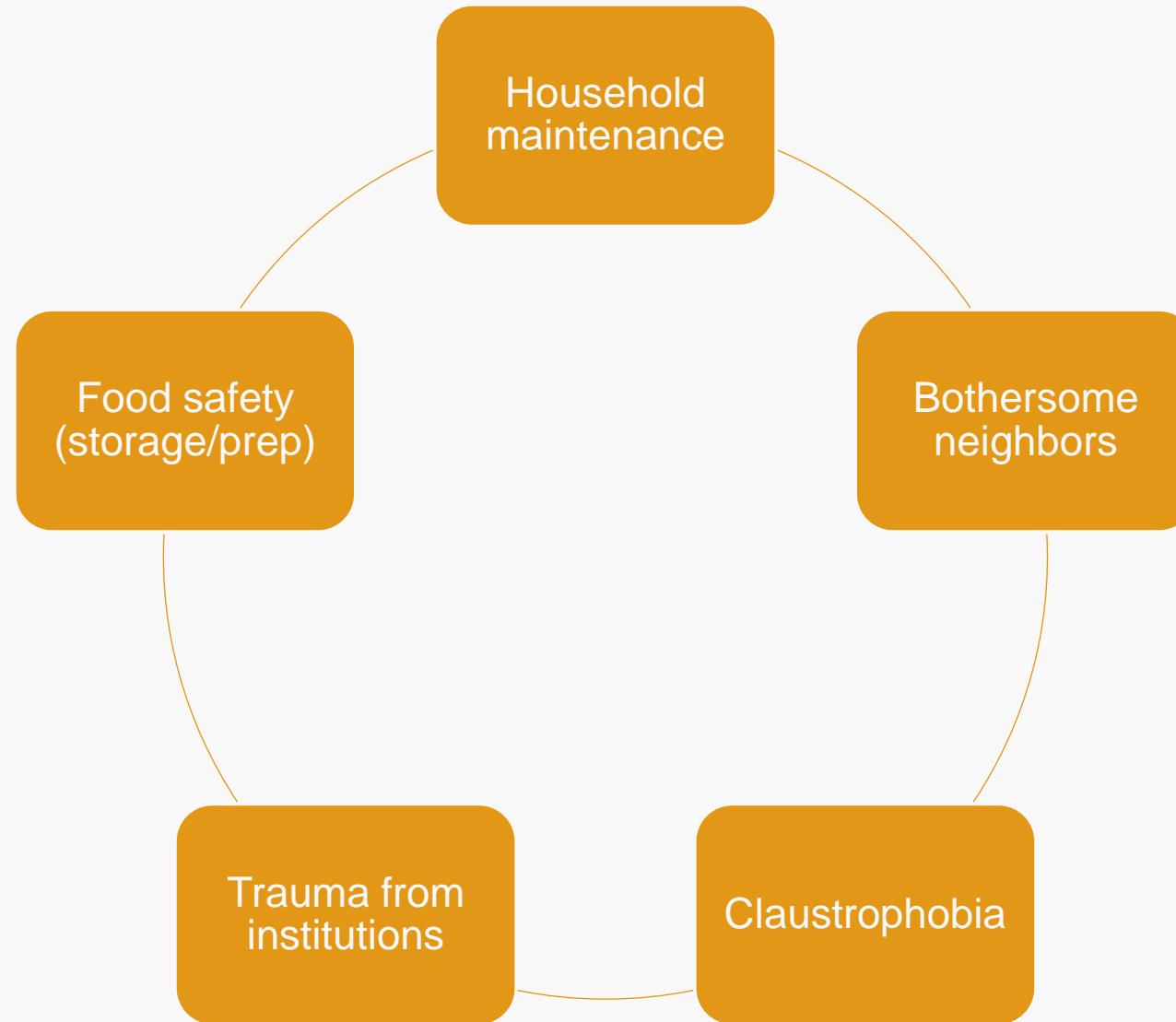
Falls in the last
12 months: 57%

Cognitive
impairment (per
results of
MMSE): 21%

Visited ED in the
last 12 months:
50%

Hospitalized in
the last 12
months: 24%

Street to House: A Hard Occupational Transition



Occupational Therapy on a Micro Level (any guesses?)

- Individualized evaluations, care plans, and skills re-training
- Environmental modifications and adaptive equipment
- Emotional/Sensory regulation supports to be a successful neighbor
- Exploring positive time use

Occupational Therapy on a Meso Level (any guesses?)

- Group therapy sessions: horticulture, cooking, budgeting, calendar maintenance, anger management, meditation
- Client-led leisure groups: social interaction, meaningful activity, and a reason to show up somewhere
- Virtual “DollarBucks” voucher system for free cleaning supplies as incentive for meeting housing goals

Occupational Therapy on a Macro Level (any guesses?)

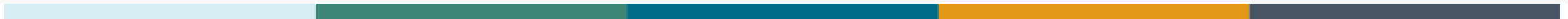
- Serve as consult for accessible, trauma-informed building design
- Provide training to housing staff to screen for cognitive impairment and working with older adults as needs change
- Provide training to outreach staff for basic equipment provisions and ways to facilitate ADL participation

Case Examples of OT in PSH

Jane, a 70-year-old with rheumatoid arthritis, above knee amputation, and transport chair placed in non-ADA emergency shelter unit

Patty, a 46-year-old with low vision and history of severe mental illness; apartment frequently infested and frequently flooded

Juan Ramon, a 58-year-old with prosthetic leg who recently broke his other leg and is now wheelchair-dependent



Questions or Comments?

Thank you!

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