

Dementia Together

Occupational therapy, coaching, education and support for people living with dementia and their care givers.



About Me

I am a qualified occupational therapist who has experience in both the community disability and aged care spaces. I love the process of getting to know the people I am working with by spending time in their home environment to truly understand their strengths and challenges. My passion lies in working with people living with dementia to maintain their independence and support them to remain safe at home and in the community through education, skill development, and collaborative problem-solving, together with care partners.

I understand that the experience of dementia can be challenging for both the person living with dementia and their care partner, and I am committed to walking alongside you both on your journey. I believe you are the expert in your own lived experience and will meet you where you are at. We will work together to develop a personalised plan that addresses your unique needs and goals, with a focus on enhancing quality of life and well-being, ensuring you feel empowered and supported throughout your journey with dementia.

Crystal O'Donnell
Occupational Therapist



The COPE Program

- The COPE (Care of Persons with Dementia in their Environments) Program is an evidenced based program that supports individuals with dementia and their care partners.
- Its primary focus is to provide care partners with the necessary tools to manage their own stress and develop effective communication and management strategies to address the unique challenges of caring for a person living with dementia.
- The program aims to enhance the quality of life for both the person living with dementia and their care partner.
- The COPE program encourages care partners to shift their perspective about changes in their loved one's behaviour and mood, often associated with dementia, and view them as outward expressions of their experience with the condition.
- Studies have shown that the COPE program has been successful in improving the well-being of individuals living with dementia and their care partners and delay aged care placement.

Is the COPE Program for you?

- The COPE Program is designed to provide support for individuals with dementia who live at home and are experiencing changes in their functional ability or behaviour.
- The program also supports those who are providing care or support to the person living with dementia and facing stress or challenges in their caregiver role.

- Both the person living with dementia and their care partner are actively involved in the process and should be available throughout its duration to experience the full benefit of the program.

Program Overview

- Typically delivered in a series of up to 10 individual one hour long sessions with a trained occupational therapist.
- The program begins with an assessment of the care partner's needs and goals.
- Following assessment the intervention sessions focus on specific topics, such as communication, problem-solving, and stress management.
- Care partners receive ongoing support and follow-up throughout the program to ensure they can implement the strategies learned.



Cognitive Rehabilitation

- Cognitive rehabilitation can assist individuals living with dementia to carry on doing activities they love.
- Dementia can result in challenges impacting performance of familiar daily tasks due to memory loss, difficulty concentrating, and impaired problem-solving abilities.
- Reduced engagement in valued activities may also be due to a lack of confidence or fear of making mistakes, rather than dementia itself.
- Cognitive rehabilitation provides practical strategies tailored to the individual's needs.
- Cognitive rehabilitation can support the person to adjust to the cognitive changes experienced.
- Cognitive rehabilitation helps the person to identify and prioritise activities that are important and find alternative ways to participate in them.

Despite the difficulties associated with dementia, there is hope for regaining confidence and rediscovering joy in life.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How are occupational therapy (OT) services funded?

- Occupational therapy services may be funded through a variety of sources in Australia, including:
 - Home Care Package (HCP)
 - Short Term Restorative Care (STRC) Program
 - Commonwealth Home Support Package (CHSP)
 - Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA)
 - Chronic Disease Management Plan
 - Private Health Insurance rebates.
- Please check with the individual program or service provider for information on funding options and eligibility.

Do you offer home-based OT services?

- All occupational therapy services are provided in the comfort of your own home.
- This helps us to develop an understanding of areas impacting your safety and engagement in your environment.

How can I be referred for services?

- You may self-refer or request a referral from a Health Professional or Care Coordinator using the referral form on the website.

What role do care partners play in the therapy process?

- Care partners are best placed to support the person living with dementia to work on goals outside of therapy as they often spend an extended amount of time with the person.
- The occupational therapist will provide education and coaching to enable the care partner to understand the condition and how to support the person to retain current skills.
- With support from the care partner the person with dementia can continue to engage in meaningful activities and live well with dementia.

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