



World Federation of Occupational Therapists Statement

14-15 September 2020 70th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

Statement on the COVID-19 Pandemic:

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) acknowledges the significant efforts of the WHO Regional Committee to contain the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. WFOT and its member groups recognise the pandemic has caused devastating consequences for how people engage in their daily activities and occupations as result of disruptive changes in community access, resource availability and individual health and well-being. Populations in Europe and around the world have been required to adjust and make compensations to usual routines in order to participate in ongoing or newly acquired occupations that are necessary for daily life.

Occupational therapy offers a broad variety of rehabilitation services to people of all ages, groups and communities affected by COVID-19 to enable their full inclusion in occupations in the home, education, work and leisure environment. Engagement in healthy occupations is needed to support survival, promote health and well-being and allow populations, communities, families and individuals to grow and flourish to realise their potential. Occupational therapists enable people to be active and productive in their community by using evidence-informed individual and population approach interventions, including skills training, education, group work and self-management strategies. Interventions reduce barriers impacting the mental, physical and cognitive health of people, their occupations and the environment in which they operate to promote meaningful lives where they live, love, work and play.

WFOT acknowledges that many people do not have access to occupational therapy and advocates for equal opportunities to rehabilitation for people affected by COVID-19 as a human right. Occupational therapy has a **substantial role in rehabilitation due to the profession's person-centred approach and expertise in the complex interaction of factors that enable occupational performance.** Optimising occupational participation through the provision of occupational therapy provides a cost-effective opportunity to promote health, ensure social inclusion and advance individual and societal recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.