

Our Philosophy and Mission

Philosophy: We believe in the development of occupational therapists into highly skilled practitioners through exposure to educational processes with a balance between mentorship, didactic, and experiential learning opportunities in targeted clinical environments.

Our program is designed to align with our facility's mission as well as the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) 2025 vision by having the fellow focus on maximizing health, well-being, and quality of life of veterans by providing effective solutions that facilitate participation in everyday living (www.AOTA.org).



Mission: To provide occupational therapists with the knowledge and skills to become an advanced hand/upper extremity occupational therapy practitioner that provides the highest quality of care to veterans by implementing evidence-based practice, evaluating outcomes, advocating for the unique occupational needs of veterans, and delivering exceptional patient care experiences.



Contact Information:

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*James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital PM&RS (117)
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd, Tampa, FL 33612*

Important Information

This is an AOTA recognized fellowship program.



Fellowship Website:

<https://www.va.gov/tampa-health-care/work-with-us/internships-and-fellowships/occupational-therapy-hand-therapy-fellowship-program/>

Teaching and Learning Methods:

The program facilitates learning through the use of a reflective learning model, whereby the fellow gains confidence in clinical decision-making skills and develops a sense of autonomy through deliberate self-reflection.

The program advances the fellow along the learner continuum, and prompts opportunities for discovery through experience, reflection, and discussion.



HAND THERAPY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



Fellowship Program Description:

The James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital & Clinics Occupational Therapy Department has established a Fellowship Program for occupational therapists interested in specializing in upper extremity rehabilitation. This program provides exposure to comprehensive education processes, with a balance between didactic/academic and experiential/clinical environments.

This fellowship offers a graduate, occupational therapist the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that contribute to building a strong foundation in hand therapy practice. This program targets candidates who plan to pursue a Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) certification in the future.

The OT Fellow will gain valuable insight and experience, through managing a clinical caseload with expert mentoring and didactic, experiential, and scholarly learning opportunities.

Facility/Program Highlights:

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital is a large, complex medical facility including:

- 13 rehabilitation programs accredited by CARF International
- State-of-the-art rehabilitation equipment and facilities
- Large, dedicated OT staff with many years of experience
- Capability to support more than 1500 trainees annually
- One of only five VA Polytrauma Centers in the nation
- Three AOTA accredited OT Fellowship Programs on-site
- Highly dedicated and experienced program mentors and subject matter experts
- On-site program faculty including Certified Hand Therapists, Certified Orthopedic Manual Therapist, Certified Lymphedema Therapist, and Amputation Specialist.

The OT Fellowship is a paid position with benefits, accrued annual/sick leave, and federal holidays. All applicants for this Fellowship must be a U.S. Citizen.

Clinical Training:

- Managing a caseload in outpatient occupational therapy, including the Hand Specialty Clinic, the Orthopedic Walk-In Clinic, and General Occupational Therapy Outpatient Clinic
- Clinical and learning opportunities in the OT Lymphedema Clinic and Amputation Specialty Clinic
- Emphasis on upper extremity conditions and their impact on occupational participation
- Well-rounded experience, providing exposure to many areas of hand therapy
- Opportunities to provide OT services during scheduled visits and in a walk-in clinic
- One-on-one mentoring sessions with highly experienced clinical mentors/faculty
- Didactic curriculum component with established scholarly activities and continuing education

Opportunities:

- OT journal club meetings
- Staff in-service presentations
- OT National Hand and Upper Extremity Rounds
- National VA Occupational Therapy Hand Rounds
- Collaboration with the orthopedic surgery team
- Interdisciplinary learning experiences with other OT fellows and PT residents
- On-site medical library, didactic resources, and materials
- Upper Extremity Surgery Observation

Curriculum:

The James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital Hand Therapy OT Fellowship Program, focuses on the fellow's development of knowledge, competency, and advanced practice skills in the following core elements:

- Advanced Knowledge
- Reasoning and Performance Skills
- Ethical Practice Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Scholarly/Professional Activities

Curriculum Continued:

The fellow's clinical experiences emphasize:

1. Acquisition of knowledge pertaining to upper extremity conditions, developing clinical reasoning skills in relation to evaluation and intervention.
2. Developing and using evidence-based practice skills as well as measuring outcomes when providing holistic occupational therapy services to clients.
3. Integration of the didactic knowledge and experiential practice to develop interpersonal, scholarly, and professional skills in everyday practice.



Goals of the Program:

To educate and train a post professional OT graduates to:

1. Meet the needs of Veterans by becoming advanced OT practitioners in the area of hand therapy OT.
2. Demonstrate using evidence-based outcome measures and advanced clinical reasoning skills by critically assessing and appraising the current literature to guide evaluation and plan of care development that facilitates occupational participation.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the AOTA ethical principles and specialty-specific ethical standards, and their implication in practice.
4. Demonstrate the ability to access and establish collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to maximize the occupational participation of clients.
5. Participate in scholarly activities such as a quality improvement project and case study development/presentation, that promote life-long learning.
6. Exhibit the highest standards of professionalism.