



**HOPE
HEALTHCARE**

media release

For immediate use

Occupational Therapy Week 20-26 October 2002

In our rehabilitation areas we've a team of team of health professionals who make up the treatment team, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, diversional therapy, dietetics, social work, medical and nursing services.

Our occupational therapists assist people recovering from serious disability caused by ageing, illness, and physical injury. The occupational therapist works with the patient to identify problem areas, assesses their abilities, interests and lifestyle and then plans appropriate treatment. The aim is to help individuals improve their quality of life by becoming more efficient and independent with daily activities. This is done through improving physical, cognitive and psychosocial functioning, educating on alternate ways of completing a task or perhaps by modifying the environment in which they live.

Sel's story – the role of the occupational therapist

Following a massive stroke early last year, 76-year-old Sel was rushed to hospital where he was critically ill for a number of weeks. After a month he was initially told he would never walk again. He was unable to move his left arm and leg at all. He was transferred to rehabilitation, fearing that he may eventually end up in a nursing home, as he required much assistance with basic daily tasks.

Sel spent many hours with the rehabilitation team. The occupational therapist taught Sel how to shower and dress himself one-handed. They gave him treatment to strengthen his left arm, and made a splint to protect it from damage. Sel started to get some movement in the arm, but it was too weak to be useful. Eventually Sel improved enough and it was decided he would be able to return home with his wife. Before going home, the occupational therapist made a visit to the house with Sel, to assess the layout with regards to his needs. Grab rails were installed for safety.

He was still unable to use his arm and he was referred back to hospital as an outpatient. Sel got to work with the occupational therapist. He proved to be very motivated, and began to make gains in movement and use of his hand and arm. He was vigilant at completing his home program of exercises. He also had splints made to help improve the range of motion in his fingers.

Before long, Sel was able to use his hand for a range of tasks such as opening jars, tying his dressing gown, opening toothpaste and fastening belts.

Sel and his wife had been playing card games with friends for 42 years; he can now hold his cards in his hand again when playing. But Sel's biggest personal gain was being able to bring his wife breakfast in bed again on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Sydney 18 October 2002

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Specialised public health care

Hope Healthcare *incorporating*
Neringah Hospital Greenwich Hospital Graythwaite Nursing Home Braeside Hospital
A ministry of the Anglican Deaconess Institution Sydney