



# Heads Up Therapies

## Curriculum Vitae – Matt Varkulis

### Occupational Therapist

#### PERSONAL PROFILE

Qualified Occupational Therapist with 3 years of experience as an Occupational Therapy Assistant I have a strong foundation in delivering client-centred, compassionate care across diverse settings. I am experienced in working with individuals with acquired brain injuries, facing mental health challenges such as anxiety and personality disorders and supporting them in developing essential life skills for reintegration. Proficient in both standardised and non-standardised assessments, including OCAIRS, MOHOST and OSA, with experience in designing and facilitating group sessions which covered areas such as self-care, mindfulness, and life skills. I am skilled in adapting therapeutic approaches to meet each client's unique needs and experienced in maintaining professional documentation using varied formats to communicate effectively with multidisciplinary teams. I have strong interpersonal and communication abilities which have been built through regular engagement with clients and MDT's.

#### EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

##### University of Central Lancashire

Sep 2022-June 2025

Bachelor of Science Occupational Therapy (1<sup>st</sup>)

##### St Helens College

2010

NVQ Level 3 Social Care with Children and Young People

##### Wigan & Leigh College

1998-2000

BTEC HND Social Care

##### Wigan & Leigh College

1995-1997

BTEC National Diploma Media Studies (Pass)

##### Lowton High School

1990-1995

GCSE 9 Grade A-C including English, Mathematics & Science


#### EMPLOYMENT

APRIL 2023 – MAY -2023

##### Stroke Rehab



 [matt.varkulis@headsuptherapies.co.uk](mailto:matt.varkulis@headsuptherapies.co.uk)

 07367 347787

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During my placement in a stroke rehabilitation unit in a local hospital, I supported individuals recovering from stroke to regain independence and improve their functional abilities through occupation-focused assessment and intervention. I contributed to person-centred rehabilitation plans tailored to each patient's physical, cognitive, and psychosocial needs.

My role would include assisting in functional assessments of activities of daily living, completing ACE III screening tests, supporting goal setting with patients and their families, and delivering interventions aimed at improving motor skills, cognitive function, and adaptive strategies for daily tasks. I also participated in discharge planning and recommending equipment or adaptations to ensure safety and independence at home.

Throughout the placement, I would work closely with the multidisciplinary team, such as physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, and nursing staff, to provide holistic care and promote optimal recovery. I also developed my clinical reasoning, documentation skills.

### **OCTOBER 2023 – DECEMBER – 2023**

#### **Wheelchair Services**

During my practice placement at a local NHS Wheelchair Services, I worked alongside specialist occupational therapists to assess, prescribe, and review wheelchair and seating solutions for individuals with a range of complex physical needs. The focus of my role was to support clients in achieving greater independence, mobility, and quality of life through appropriate postural management and equipment provision.

I participated in holistic assessments, both in clinic and in community settings, to evaluate clients' functional abilities, lifestyle, and environmental factors. I contributed to the clinical reasoning process in recommending standard or specialist wheelchairs, pressure-relieving cushions, and bespoke seating systems. This would involve considering long-term health outcomes such as posture, pressure care, and social participation.

Throughout the placement, I also gained experience in documentation, liaising with multidisciplinary professionals, and understanding the commissioning and provision pathways of wheelchair services. Additionally, I reflected on the importance of collaborative goal setting and person-centred practice in promoting occupational performance and engagement through mobility aids.

### **MARCH 20254 – MAY 202**

#### **HMP Pipe Unit Cat C**

During my role-emerging placement on a PIPE Unit at a local prison, I aimed to explore and develop the role of occupational therapy within a psychologically informed custodial environment that supports individuals with complex psychological needs. Working under in collaboration with the PIPE team, my focus



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would be on identifying how occupational engagement can enhance residents' psychological wellbeing, stability, and readiness for progression through the offender pathway.

I conducted standardised and non-standardised assessments and observations to understand residents' occupational needs, routines, and barriers to meaningful engagement. Based on these insights, I designed and facilitated occupation-focused sessions, such as structured group activities, creative and reflective workshops, and life skills development. I would also work to raise awareness of occupational therapy's potential contribution within the PIPE setting by sharing reflections, contributing to team discussions, and producing evidence-based resources.

This placement required a strong emphasis on initiative, professional reasoning, and adaptability, as well as a trauma-informed and person-centred approach, to ensure that interventions are both meaningful and psychologically safe for participants within the prison.

### **JANUARY 2025 – MARCH 2025**

#### **HMP OPD Cat B**

During my placement on a Personality Disorder unit at a category B Prison, I supported the rehabilitation and occupational engagement of individuals with complex mental health needs and personality disorders within a secure environment. My role would involve assessing prisoners' functional abilities, facilitate structured activities, and promote meaningful occupation to enhance wellbeing, motivation, self-regulation, and pro-social behaviour.

I was able to develop and deliver individualised interventions, such as skills-based groups (e.g., emotional regulation, daily living skills, and leisure activities), and collaborate with the multidisciplinary team to support risk management and rehabilitation planning. A key focus was on promoting independence, routine, and purposeful occupation within the constraints of a custodial setting, while maintaining professional boundaries and adhering to ethical and security protocols.


### **NOVEMBER 2021 – APRIL 2025**

#### **Occupational Therapy Assistant | Heads Up Therapies Ltd | Astley, Greater Manchester**

Roles and responsibilities include observing clients participating in activities to assess their strengths and challenges. Gather information on how they are performing in areas such as cognitive, physical abilities, and social interactions to help with OT assessments. Assist in carrying out personalised therapy plans created by the OT, focusing on skills such as daily tasks, motor function, cognition, and emotional well-being. Work with clients on practical activities like dressing, grooming, preparing meals, and mobility exercises to help



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them become more independent. Support exercises that build strength, coordination, and flexibility, helping clients adapt to any physical challenges.

**MAY 2018 – FEB 2024**

### **Support Worker | Prestige Nursing Ltd | Middleton, Greater Manchester**

Responsibilities include providing personal care and support with activities of daily living such as dressing, bathing, meal preparation, and mobility. Assist with cognitive and physical rehabilitation by encouraging and facilitating exercises and activities that promote independence, improve motor function, and enhance cognitive abilities. Assist in creating a safe and supportive environment to ensure that the individual's physical and emotional needs are met. Additionally, observe and monitor the progress of the individual, documenting changes in behaviour, mood, and abilities, and reporting them to the clinical team.

**NOV 2008 – APR 2013**

### **Residential Care Worker | PIC Children's Services Ltd | Haydock, UK**

Responsibilities included assisting the young person with daily routines, including meals, getting ready for school, and maintaining personal hygiene, while fostering independence. Building a supportive, trusting relationship with the young person to help them feel secure, offering guidance and positive reinforcement for managing emotions and behaviour. Support educational activities, social skill development, and recreational engagement through hobbies, outings, and community events. Monitor their physical and mental health, administer medication as needed, and provide a calm environment for managing stress and emotional challenges. Follow safeguarding procedures to ensure a safe environment and help build self-confidence by teaching life skills in budgeting, cooking, and problem-solving.



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