



CTRA 2025

June
10 - 12
2025



One Voice, Driving Change -
Enhancing Recreation Therapy

The Westin Nova Scotian - Halifax, Nova Scotia

Table of contents

01

Welcome from Co-Chairs

02

Schedule Day 1 - June 10, 2025

03

Schedule Day 2 - June 11, 2025

04

Schedule Day 3 - June 12, 2025

05

Social Events

06

Live Sessions

07

Pre-Recorded Sessions

Welcome from Co-Chairs

Welcome Colleagues!

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to what we hope will be a transformative event, where we come together as a unified force and a shared vision: to inspire, innovate, and lead change in the field of Therapeutic Recreation and beyond. The theme “One Voice, Driving Change” symbolizes the power of our collective action, where diverse perspectives unite with a common purpose to make a lasting impact.

In this space, we will explore how, as one voice, we can challenge existing norms, influence policy, and elevate the practice of therapeutic recreation to new heights. By sharing our knowledge, experiences, and expertise, we will collectively drive the changes that are needed to better serve the individuals and communities who rely on our services.

Over the course of this conference, you will hear from leaders in the field, engage in dynamic workshops, and connect with colleagues who share your passion for improving lives through recreation. These conversations will inspire you to continue pushing boundaries, to think innovatively, and to remember that the power of one voice can spark a movement for change.

As always, the CTRA conference will provide top-notch educational, networking and of course recreation opportunities. The conference will be held at the Historic Westin in downtown Halifax. The Westin Nova Scotian is located in the Halifax Seaport District, and provides you access to walk along the Halifax waterfront boardwalk that follows the water’s edge alongside the world’s second largest ice-free harbour. Whether you’re a longtime local or visiting from farther away, let us help you experience all that there is to love about Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Let’s embrace this opportunity to drive change, together.

Dawn MacDonald and Shelley Smith, Conference Co-Chairs
on behalf of the CTRA Conference Planning Committee

EchoBox Memory Vault Annual Sponsor



Streamlining communication for a higher Quality of Life

echobox.ca

Life is good, time is fleeting and memories are precious. EchoBox Memory Vault provides a safe, ad-free environment to capture these magical stories – your own, or for those around you! Whether you wish to journal personal experiences, help create a legacy for someone you love or elevate the Quality of Life for those in your care, EchoBox is now available worldwide.

Senior populations around the world continue to swell while the number of caregivers joining the workforce continues to slide. New solutions are urgently required in healthcare to achieve superior outcomes and maintain a higher level of care. Senior depression and cognitive decline plague some of the most vulnerable and most lovely people in our communities. These are our parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, neighbors and dear friends. Their collective memories, experiences and contributions to society should be voiced, celebrated and showcased! The time for a trustworthy technology to fill the void and make a lasting impact is long overdue. Let us introduce the newest person-centric approach in healthcare: EchoBox Memory Vault.

To Learn More about EchoBox Please Visit: <https://echobox.ca/>



Keynote Speaker: RJ Roggeveen (He/Him)

Speaker Bio:

RJ was the first wheelchair user to be admitted to Dalhousie University's Medical School after completing his BSc (Recreation) in 2023. RJ is Metis from BC and currently a 2nd year Medical Student who is co-founder of the Disabled Not Dead nonprofit society and is co-executive of the Disability in Medicine Interest Group. RJ lives with a physical disability and has become an advocate for accessibility in healthcare and his community. Through the nonprofit he has launched a peer-led wheelchair skills group and networking initiatives to improve community connections for those with disabilities. He has chosen to share his experiences with medical education and disability through social media and the Rolling Out Of Med Blog.

Reimagining Possibility Through Recreation and Advocacy

"Recreation therapy gave me the tools to find my voice in an inaccessible world." Come explore how recreation therapy can spark systemic change when paired with advocacy and lived experience. RJ Roggeveen shares how he co-founded a nonprofit, launched a peer-led wheelchair skills program, and used social media to challenge ableist narratives in healthcare. As a medical student in a wheelchair, he offers insight around transforming barriers into leadership opportunities—and invites us to reimagine a system where every body is empowered to lead.

Schedule - Day 1 (June 10, 2025)

7:30 AM Registration & Breakfast
Common Wealth A/B

8:30 AM Welcome Announcements & Opening Keynote
Common Wealth A

9:45 AM Break & Exhibitor Networking

10:15 AM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

[LIVE] No Longer 'Us and Them': Integrating a Recreation-based Intervention as an Interdisciplinary Care Approach
Presented by: Katelyn Scott, Sienna Caspar, Kaitlyn Edwards

Motivational Interviewing in Community Brain Injury Rehabilitation: Strategies for Enhancing Engagement and Behavioral Change
Presented by: Pei-Chun Hsieh & Katie Hill

Putting evidence into practice: The Evolution of an Acute Care Recreation Therapy Practice
Presented by: Andrea King

Digital Evolution: AI Tools for Modern RT Practice
Presented by: Susan Purrington

11:45AM Lunch Break
Common Wealth A/B

12:30 PM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

Engaging Psychiatric Inpatients Through Virtual Travel: A Creative Approach to Recreation Therapy
Presented by: Dana Moore

[LIVE] Introducing the Life Spaces Practice Model for Recreational Therapy
Presented by: Dr. Shay Dawson

School Based Recreation Therapy for Children and Youth with Diverse Needs
Presented by: Linda Martin & Roxanne Lang

Digital Evolution: AI Tools for Modern RT Practice
Presented by: Susan Purrington

2:00 PM Break & Exhibitor Networking

2:45 PM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

Therapeutic Recreation in a Municipal Setting: Influencing Change and Managing Setbacks
Presented by: Cassady Yochoff & Jennifer Fischer

[LIVE] Increasing Emotional Self-Efficacy in TR Practice
Presented by: Dr. Colleen Deyell Hood

Enhancing Older Adults' Well-Being Through Community-Based PERMA Programs: Insights from an 8-Week Intervention in Taiwan
Presented by: Pei-Chun Hsieh & Li-Jung Lin

Digital Evolution: AI Tools for Modern RT Practice
Presented by: Susan Purrington

**All times are in Atlantic Time*

Schedule - Day 2 (June 11, 2025)

7:30 - 8:30 AM Breakfast

8:45 AM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

Let's Learn How To WRAP

Presented by: Carl Ings

Tapping our Potential: Recreation Therapy Associates in Healthcare in NS

Presented by: Dawn MacDonald & Shelley Smith

[LIVE]

Understanding Neurodiversity: Creating Neuroaffirming Spaces for Clients, Students, and Teams

Presented by: Katie Heckman

Strength in Partnership: Therapeutic Recreation Services Enhancing Patient Outcomes Through Interprofessional Collaboration at YRH

Presented by: Chloe d'Eon & Jennelle d'Entremont

10:15 AM Break & Exhibitor Networking

11:00 AM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

Taking Your Research Ideas to the Next Level!

Presented by: Katelyn Scott, Devan McNeill, Tiffany Morin

My reflections on being a COT: The Adventures of a Recreation Therapist Working on a Mental Health Community Outreach Team (COT)

Presented by: Catherine Lubberts

[LIVE]

Bridging Generations: Enhancing Team Dynamics and Cultural Competence in Recreational Therapy Workplaces

Presented by: Angela Wozencroft & Ashley Hamilton

Supporting Emotional Resilience: Addressing Climate Emotions Through Nature

Presented by: Alexis Ashworth

12:30 PM Lunch Break

1:30 PM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

Roads to Recovery: Evolving the Mental Health and Addictions Discharge Liaison Program

Presented by: Charlene Edwards, Gillian Kinsella, Tara Butler

Educational Program Accreditation in Recreational Therapy: Critical for Educators, Students, & Practitioners

Presented by: David Loy

NCTRC Overview of Services

Presented by: Susan Kaufer & Robin McNeal

[LIVE]

Culturally Responsive Therapeutic Recreation Practice with 2SLGBTQIA+ Populations: Evidence-Based Interventions that Promote Health Equity

Presented by: Austin Oswald

2:30 PM Break & Exhibitor Networking

3:00 PM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

[LIVE]

Prioritizing Pleasure: The Importance of Disabled Sexualities in Therapeutic Recreation

Presented by: Rachele Manett

Trauma Informed Weight lifting and Trauma Sensitive Yoga for Residential Psychiatric Care Using the Trauma Sensitive Yoga and Trauma Informed Weightlifting Models

Presented by: Teresa Marvel & Leanora Eurbanks

Together in Tech: Empowering Our Collective Voice Through AI in Recreation Therapy

Presented by: Susan Purrington

Bridging Theory and Practice: Utilizing Unique Robotic Animals as Teaching Tools in Recreation Therapy Education Outside of the Classroom

Presented by: Christine Wilkinson

Schedule - Day 3 (June 12, 2025)

7:30 - 8:30 AM Breakfast

9:00 AM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

(LIVE)

Therapeutic Recreation and the Culture Change Movement: Exploring the Value of Prioritizing Quality of Life Over Functional Outcomes

Presented by: Sienna Caspar

The What is to What Will Be... Guidance to Self-Advocacy.

Presented by: Shaun Geise

The Impact of Collaboration Between Recreational Therapy and the Center of Performing Arts Medicine on the Skilled Nursing Unit

Presented by: Stephanie Janczak

Everyday Moments of Leisure: Implications for Uses in Therapeutic Recreation Practice

Presented by: Ashlyn Stevens, Susan Hutchinson, Karen Gallant

10:00 AM Break & Exhibitor Networking

10:30 AM Breakout Sessions (Choose One):

(LIVE)

Changing Canada One Space at a Time: Promoting the Accessible Canada Act in Recreational Therapy

Presented by: David Loy

Leisure Education as a Resource for Supporting the Transition to Retirement

Presented by: Susan Hutchinson

LIFTS: Leveraging Inclusion and Friendship to Thrive after Stroke

Presented by: Tiffany Morin

Exploring Job Satisfaction for Recreation Therapy Professionals in Mental Health Care: Reconnecting to Our "Why" Matters!

Presented by: Devan McNeill

11:30 PM Lunch Break & Drag Brunch

1:00 PM

(LIVE)

Shaping the Future of CTRA: Evidence-Informed Change in Recreation Therapy

Presented by: CTRA Leadership

**All times are in Atlantic Time*

SOCIAL EVENTS

Thursday June 12th
11:30 am - 1pm

Drag Brunch

At this event conference attendees will have the opportunity to learn about how the art of drag promotes visibility and fosters a sense of belonging for individuals of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and watch performances by local drag queens as you enjoy a provided brunch. The performances often include lip-syncing, dancing, and jokes. Guests are encouraged to sing along and tip the performers.

Monday June 9th
4pm - 6pm

Pre-Conference Happy Hour at Garrison Brewery

Join us for a pre-conference happy hour at the Garrison Brewery! It's the perfect chance to meet fellow attendees, catch up with old friends, and kick off the event with some great drinks and conversation. Enjoy a selection of craft beers, ciders, and sodas, in a welcoming atmosphere before diving into the conference. We can't wait to see you there, let's toast to a fantastic conference ahead!

<https://www.garrisonbrewing.com/brewery/>

Tuesday June 10th

Evening Wine + Cheese Social Event

We are excited for delegates to attend the Wine and Cheese Social Tuesday evening from 7-11 p.m. during the CTRA conference. During the first hour of this event, attendees will be able to network while East Coast tunes play quietly in the background. There will also be the CTRA Awards Ceremony and Silent Auction taking place during this event. To end the evening we have Matt Steele and The Corvette Sunset; local musicians that will be playing covers of favourite tunes for folks to enjoy on the dance floor!

Live Sessions Sessions

No Longer 'Us and Them': Integrating a Recreation-based Intervention as an Interdisciplinary Care Approach (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Katelyn Scott, Sienna Caspar, Kaitlyn Edwards

Session Description:

In this interactive session, you will learn about a recent study that utilized the Feasible and Sustainable Culture Change Initiative (FASCCI) Model to increase the use of a recreation intervention (Tovertafel/Magic Table) by an interdisciplinary team in a residential care home. A significant outcome of this study was increasing the value of recreation as a first-line care approach by interdisciplinary members and the development of meaningful relationships between nursing, therapeutic recreation, spiritual care, volunteers, families, and of course—residents! You will learn how an interdisciplinary team transformed their perspectives and care routines to be more person-centred, collaborative, and holistic. The session will encourage you to share ideas and increase your understanding of how you can apply this information into your professional practice.

Therapeutic Recreation and the Culture Change Movement: Exploring the Value of Prioritizing Quality of Life Over Functional Outcomes. (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Sienna Caspar & Aimee Douziech

Session Description:

The culture change movement advocates for improved long-term care (LTC) resident quality of life. Research indicates that recreation and leisure are essential contributors to improving residents' quality of life. However, there continues to be pressure for TR services to focus on functional outcomes for improved health as opposed to improving resident quality of life and creating a sense of home. This is because the TR profession has historically been shaped by the dominant medical discourse focused on measurable outcomes, which permeates the healthcare sector. In this presentation, we present findings from a comparative case study conducted to better understand the barriers and enablers TR professionals experience in advancing the aims of the culture change movement. Come to this session to take a deep dive into this important (and sometimes controversial) discussion about TR services prioritizing the value of leisure experiences for improved quality of life over functional outcomes.

Introducing the Life Spaces Practice Model for Recreational Therapy (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Dr. Shay Dawson

Session Description:

Those attending this session will be introduced to the Life Spaces Practice Model. Practice models provide clinicians with a guide to direct recreational therapy practice. The field of therapeutic recreation has a variety of practice models, yet lack the following: 1) a model informed by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health Model, 2) relevant across cultures, 3) engages disability studies approaches, and 4) addresses current critiques within the field. The Life Spaces Practice Model utilizes the ICF as a foundational theoretical approach to target two areas (activity and participation) of treatment and introduces the concept of Life Spaces. Therapists utilizing this approach will be able to clearly target the personal life space (ICF activity domain) or the community life space (ICF participation domain) of their clients. Additionally, this model provides the CTRS® with a guide to recreational therapy treatment by engaging with disability studies theory and approaches to interaction and philosophy while working with clients. An overview of the Life Spaces Model for recreational therapy is presented along with definitions and practical examples for therapists.

Roads to Recovery: Evolving the Mental Health and Addictions Discharge Liaison Program (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Charlene Edwards, Gillian Kinsella, Tara Butler

Session Description:

Discover how a three-year Discharge Liaison Program has been transformed to better meet the needs of individuals transitioning from acute psychiatry services. This session will explore the innovative introduction of two distinct pathways, designed to align with the Stages of Change model. Participants will learn how these tailored approaches provide personalized support based on a client's readiness for change, ensuring smoother transitions and improved outcomes. Through case examples, data insights, and interactive discussion, attendees will gain practical strategies for implementing stage-based interventions in discharge planning to foster client engagement and long-term recovery.

Educational Program Accreditation in Recreational Therapy: Critical for Educators, Students, & Practitioners (60 Minutes)

Presented by: David Loy

Session Description:

Accreditation is critical to the preparation of recreational therapists. The importance of accreditation extends to educators, students, and practitioners in the field of recreational therapy. Come learn about the role that each play in preparing future RT professionals.

Leisure Education as a Resource for Supporting the Transition to Retirement (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Susan Hutchinson

Session Description:

Some people—especially those who have been deeply attached to their work or professional role—struggle to find meaning and purpose in life post-retirement. This can often lead to depression or other negative health outcomes. Sometimes, it is often not until someone has retired that they come to realize how challenging it is to structure their time post-work, and to rebuild a sense of purpose and fulfillment to replace some of the valued meanings and social connections that work had provided. Building on my own and other research about retirement planning, leisure education modules and tools addressing planning for lifestyle factors impacting well-being and satisfaction in retirement were developed. In this presentation content and processes used within retirement lifestyle planning workshops/programs will be described, and evaluation results and recommendations (and opportunities) for TR practice will be shared.

Therapeutic Recreation in a Municipal setting: Influencing Change and Managing Setbacks (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Cassady Yochoff & Jennifer Fischer

Session Description:

The Inclusion and Accessibility department in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is currently undergoing an Inclusion Support Analysis and Evaluation due to be completed by 2026. This session will explore the process of the analysis, the history of Inclusion and Accessibility services at HRM Parks and Recreation, and where we hope to go from here.

Taking your Research Ideas to the Next Level! (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Katelyn Scott, Devan McNeill, Tiffany Morin

Session Description:

In this workshop, delegates will bring their research ideas and be prepared to advance their skills in moving their ideas to an action plan. We will review PICO, how to write a research proposal, and funding suggestions. Get ready to move TR forward with research.

Engaging Psychiatric Inpatients through Virtual Travel: A Creative Approach to Recreation Therapy (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Dana Moore & Maris Mostad

Session Description:

Explore how virtual travel can enhance therapeutic outcomes for psychiatric inpatients through Virtual Voyagers: Exploring the World Together. This innovative group combines live or replayed virtual tours with creative, interactive activities such as personalized passport books and cultural discussions. This session will demonstrate how virtual travel stimulates cognitive function, fosters social interaction, and promotes emotional well-being. Attendees will learn practical strategies for implementing this program, incorporating adaptive tools, and evaluating outcomes to enrich current programming.

Bridging Generations: Enhancing Team Dynamics and Cultural Competence in Recreational Therapy Workplaces (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Angela Wozencroft, Ashley Hamilton

Session Description:

In a rapidly evolving field, understanding generational diversity in recreational therapy is essential for creating cohesive and effective teams. While working with co-workers can be challenging, this session will provide attendees with actionable insights into the unique values, communication styles, and work ethics across generations—from Baby Boomers to Generation Z—and how these differences impact team dynamics. Participants will leave with strategies to adapt workplace practices that foster collaboration, promote cultural competence, and address generational differences.

LIFTS: Leveraging Inclusion and Friendship to Thrive after Stroke (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Tiffany Morin

Session Description:

LIFTS is a Calgary-based peer program for kids & youth with stroke and their families. Learn about the interdisciplinary research process that was taken to re-ignite this group after a pandemic hiatus. Collaboration between TR, OT, and patient partners was taken to establish a meaningful, purposeful, and effective community peer support group. Peer meetings are both leisure-based (for the kids & youth) and education-based (for the parents). Learn about how TR processes, such as program planning and evaluation have been used in the LIFTS program. <https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/research/perinatal-stroke/families/lifts>

Supporting Emotional Resilience: Addressing Climate Emotions through Nature (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Alexis Ashworth

Session Description:

As climate change reshapes our environment, its emotional impact—ranging from eco-anxiety to grief—calls for thoughtful therapeutic approaches. This presentation introduces recreational therapists to foundational concepts and strategies for addressing these complex emotions in clients. Participants will explore eco-resilience, emotional literacy, and adaptive coping skills, along with key concepts like psychological safeness, the "Hope Gap," and balancing emotional well-being. The session will include practical ideas such as mindfulness exercises, nature-based activities, and visualization techniques to inspire hope and action. Designed to inform and inspire, this presentation equips therapists with a framework for helping clients navigate climate-related emotions while fostering resilience and meaningful engagement in their communities.

Digital Evolution: AI Tools for Modern RT Practice (1/2 Day Session)

Presented by: Susan Purrington

Session Description:

This comprehensive half-day workshop expands on the transformative potential of generative AI tools in recreation therapy while providing hands-on experience and deeper exploration of practical applications. Participants will gain extensive practice with AI tools across the APIED process, developing confidence in ethical integration while maintaining client-centered care.

NCTRC Overview of Services (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Susan Kaufer & Robin McNeal

Session Description:

This session will focus on various aspects of the NCTRC Certification Program including applying for professional eligibility, recertification requirements, and specialization area designations. In addition, the speakers will provide an overview of special projects and NCTRC news from the past year.

Together in Tech: Empowering Our Collective Voice Through AI in Recreation Therapy (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Susan Purrington

Session Description:

This innovative session explores the transformative potential of generative AI tools in recreation therapy while emphasizing the importance of maintaining client-centered care. Participants will discover practical applications of AI across the APIED process, from streamlining documentation to enhancing activity adaptation and program development. Through interactive demonstrations and collaborative discussion, we will examine how recreation therapists can ethically integrate AI tools to augment their practice while preserving the essential human elements of therapeutic relationships. This session bridges the gap between technological advancement and therapeutic excellence, empowering practitioners to drive positive changes in service delivery.

School Based Recreation Therapy for Children and Youth with Diverse Needs (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Linda Martin, & Roxanne Lang

Session Description:

Research results from two studies on School Based Recreation Therapy for children and youth with diverse needs will be discussed. These include a 2024 study, Assessing the Need for Recreation Therapy Services (RTS) for Students with High and Complex Needs within the School System, where the needs assessment study analyzed the scope of recreation therapy services in schools for students with high and varied needs identifying who is being referred to these services and identified its existing gaps. Secondly, results from a 2023 study that focused on determining the benefits of providing TR services to children and youth with mental health, physical, developmental and/or learning disabilities, within two divisions and five different school program areas in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, will also be presented. An opportunity to discuss future research and funding opportunities in this area will be provided in a question-and-answer format.

My Reflections on Being a COT: The Adventures of a Recreation Therapist Working on a Mental Health Community Outreach Team (COT) (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Catherine Lubberts

Session Description:

Using foundational knowledge from my TR/RT education, studying for CTRS designation, mix in my background in the recreation field, I was accepted to become part of – COT! I work in Mental Health & Addictions as part of COT - Community Outreach Team, as a CTRS. My manager, having seen the value of a CTRS knowledge and skill set, created a role for a RT/TR on the multidisciplinary COT.

The referrals come from clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, social workers, and more. Clients participate by choice as the service is voluntary, a tier 3 service. My role with Mental Health & Addictions COT is unique; as I work across the age span, assess/process background information through the charted notes and conversations with the client, design programs that fit each client, implement and support the client through this process as required, evaluate in an ongoing process and re-adjust as we work together.

Culturally Responsive Therapeutic Recreation Practice with 2SLGBTQIA+ Populations: Evidence-Based Interventions that Promote Health Equity (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Austin Oswald

Session Description:

Drawing on research and practice, this presentation explores culturally responsive therapeutic recreation (TR) interventions tailored to the unique needs of Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and additional sexual and gender diverse (2SLGBTQIA+) populations. These populations experience distinct health disparities rooted in systemic oppression and discrimination, which often hinder access to the therapeutic benefits of recreation and leisure. This session examines both health risks and protective factors among 2SLGBTQIA+ populations, along with culturally tailored TR practices that promote health equity. Key topics include culturally responsive care, health disparities and equity, and strategies for fostering 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming and inclusive practice. Attendees will gain practical knowledge for conducting assessments and designing programs that effectively support 2SLGBTQIA+ clients while upholding professional and ethical standards. By integrating cultural responsiveness into practice, TR practitioners can enhance inclusivity, advance equity, and address the evolving needs of both the profession and the populations they serve.

Strength in Partnership: Therapeutic Recreation Services Enhancing Patient Outcomes Through Interprofessional Collaboration at YRH (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Chloe d'Eon & Jennelle d'Entremont

Session Description:

In this session, you will discover Yarmouth Regional Hospital's growing interprofessional team and our dedication to making strides to enhancing patient quality of care. The team's collaborative approach has allowed us to effectively maximize our resources and professional scopes of practice in a rural hospital. This presentation outlines the efforts of our TR team in creating successful partnerships within the interprofessional team that have strengthened our team's communication, implementation, and discharge planning skills. Together, we have developed collaborative TR-based programs and interventions that incorporate interdisciplinary goals to optimize patient treatments and recovery within the various populations we serve at our regional site including: acute care, palliative care, alternate level of care, renal dialysis, and veterans place units.

Motivational Interviewing in Community Brain Injury Rehabilitation: Strategies for Enhancing Engagement and Behavioral Change (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Pei-Chun Hsieh & Katie Hill

Session Description:

This presentation explores the use of motivational interviewing (MI) to promote behavioral changes in adults with brain injuries, focusing on its application in community-based therapeutic recreation services. MI is a client-centered, goal-driven approach that helps individuals overcome ambivalence and build motivation for change. Its empathetic, non-confrontational style has shown effectiveness in addressing challenges like poor treatment adherence, cognitive and emotional difficulties, and impaired self-awareness following acquired brain injury (ABI). Therapeutic recreation professionals can use MI to help clients recognize symptoms, set meaningful goals, and engage in community reintegration. This session reviews key MI theories, including the transtheoretical stages of change model and self-determination theory, and highlights research on their effectiveness. Practical examples from a community-based rehabilitation setting will demonstrate strategies for fostering therapeutic relationships, supporting individualized treatment plans, and enhancing participation in therapeutic recreation programs. Challenges and implementation strategies will also be discussed.

Bridging Theory and Practice: Utilizing Unique Robotic Animals as Teaching Tools in Recreation Therapy Education Outside of the Classroom (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Christine Wilkinson, & Carol Phillips

Session Description:

Funded by Niagara College's Research Opportunities Fund, a 10 month, 3-phase study set out to explore the value and best practice processes of using unique robotic animals as teaching tools outside the recreation therapy classroom. Over the course of 20 visits to 7 different long-term care homes, more than 170 residents were introduced to robotic seals "Coco" and "Flo" and/or robotic birds "Charlie" and "Sam" by recreation therapy staff and placement students. As the visits unfolded, staff, students and the research team discovered many approaches that led to meaningful engagement by residents, as well as ideas for resources and tools that could be created to best support these visits. This session will introduce you to the steps involved in the study, the features of the robotic animals utilized, the main findings, the resources that were created, and future opportunities being explored.

Putting evidence into Practice: The Evolution of an Acute Care Recreation Therapy Practice (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Andrea King

Session Description:

This session will explore the process used in an acute care recreation therapy program to aid in development of an evidence informed practice. We will discuss how the evidence is used, the role of data collection in acute care, integration and contribution of recreation therapy interns, and how this new model supports clinical practice in times of transition.

Tapping our Potential: Recreation Therapy Associates in Healthcare in NS (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Dawn MacDonald & Shelley Smith

Session Description:

The role of the Recreation Therapy Associate has existed in NS for over 30 years. The purpose of this session is to highlight the independent scope of practice of an RTA, the collaborative work with the CTRS, and how this relationship provides optimal care for our clients. Three TR Diploma Educators as well as current RTA's will present on the educational requirements and provide examples of current role within different settings.

Exploring Job Satisfaction for Recreation Therapy Professionals in Mental Health Care: Reconnecting to Our “Why” Matters! (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Devan McNeill

Session Description:

In mental health care, staff retention is more critical than ever. One key strategy for improving retention is exploring job satisfaction levels. However, little is known in understanding the job satisfaction of recreation therapy professionals within mental health settings. This presentation highlights a thematic analysis study that investigates the factors that enable and impede job satisfaction. The study involved interviews with recreation therapy professionals across three mental health sites in Western Canada. The key findings offer valuable insights for practice, highlighting areas where job satisfaction can be improved and providing actionable implications for enhancing staff retention.

Increasing Emotional Self-Efficacy in TR Practice (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Colleen Deyell Hood

Session Description:

In TR services, we often emphasize positive emotion as an outcome of TR services. But this is only half of the emotion regulation picture. If we don't equip clients with the tools to manage their difficult emotions, then they will struggle to increase their well-being. In this session, we will explore the role of TR professionals in supporting the down-regulation of intense, uncomfortable emotions, in learning strategies to increase distress tolerance, and in the enhancement of positive emotion. All these strategies contribute to emotional self-efficacy.

Understanding Neurodiversity: Creating Neuroaffirming Spaces for Clients, Students, and Teams (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Katie Heckman

Session Description:

This session provides foundational knowledge on supporting neurodivergent individuals and strategies for implementing neuro-affirming practices in the workplace, whether with clients, students, or coworkers. Highlights include initiatives from the Regional Allied Health Clinical Education team at Vancouver Coastal Health, such as training staff and preceptors and adapting workplace approaches to support neurodivergent individuals. Attendees will leave with practical tools to create inclusive, equitable, and empowering environments that support neurodivergent individuals in all areas of recreation therapy.

Prioritizing Pleasure: The Importance of Disabled Sexualities in Therapeutic Recreation (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Rachele Manett

Session Description:

Sex is considered an important part of recreation and leisure for many people in the disability community, but often left out of TR settings for fear of a lack of competency or discomfort with the topic. In this session, we'll explore the need for disability-focused sexuality education in TR settings, discuss best practices for engaging in conversations about sex, and learn about some examples of current sexuality-based programs and services based in the findings from a masters thesis project completed in 2019.

Shaping the Future of CTRA: Evidence-Informed Change in Recreation Therapy (195 Minutes)

Presented by: CTRA Leadership

Session Description:

The Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA) is at a pivotal moment, preparing for significant organizational changes shaping the future of recreation therapy in Canada. This interactive three-hour session invites delegates to actively engage in a hands-on review of CTRA's proposed bylaws, potential name change, and new strategic plan.

Through a collaborative and evidence-informed approach, participants will have the opportunity to provide direct input into CTRA's structural and strategic direction. This session will not only ensure transparency and alignment with membership priorities but also empower attendees to play an active role in shaping the profession's future.

Key discussion areas will include:

- A detailed review of the proposed bylaws, ensuring they support a strong, functional, and inclusive governance structure.
- Exploration of the rationale and potential impact of a proposed name change.
- Analyzing the new strategic plan to confirm its alignment with member needs, professional standards, and emerging trends in recreation therapy.

Facilitated by CTRA leadership, this session is designed to foster open dialogue, gather valuable member insights, and strengthen the collective vision for Recreation Therapy in Canada.

Trauma Informed Weight lifting and Trauma Sensitive Yoga for residential psychiatric care using the Trauma Sensitive Yoga and Trauma Informed Weightlifting Models (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Teresa Marvel, Leanora Eurbanks

Session Description:

Exploring the impact of Trauma Sensitive Yoga and Trauma Informed Weightlifting in a residential psychiatric unit with trauma patients. Facilitating mind/body practices, breath awareness using a non directive approach offering choice and emphasizing interoceptive awareness. Creating a healing space for the patients to participate in this type of modality.

Enhancing Older Adults' Well-Being Through Community-Based PERMA Programs: Insights from an 8-Week Intervention in Taiwan (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Pei-Chun Hsieh & Li-Jung Lin

Session Description:

This presentation introduces the application of Seligman's PERMA model to design community-based programs that promote well-being among older adults with depressive symptoms. The PERMA model identifies five core elements of psychological well-being: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. We will share insights from an 8-week intervention conducted in Taiwan with 34 community-dwelling older adults. The program structure included one two-hour session per week for eight weeks, designed to enhance well-being across five domains: physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and spiritual. Preliminary results indicate positive outcomes in participants' well-being as well as symptom alleviation. Attendees will learn practical techniques for developing PERMA-based programs, explore tools for assessing participant progress, and engage in discussions about challenges faced during program implementation. This session aims to present evidence-based approaches to enhancing older adults' well-being in community settings and to explore the feasibility of applying similar programs to diverse cultural contexts.

Everyday Moments of Leisure: Implications for Uses in Therapeutic Recreation Practice (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Ashlyn Stevens, Susan Hutchinson, Karen Gallant

Session Description:

Everyday moments of leisure (EML) refers to short enjoyable pauses that occur within the context of everyday life. These momentary experiences can include pausing to watch the sunset or stopping to pet a dog on the street. Research was conducted with 20 adults, where participants were invited to explore the role and meaning that these moments play in their life over a series of interviews. Findings suggest that these moments provide a welcomed contrast and escape from everyday stressors and obligations. This session will provide an overview of the research, and will consider the contribution that EML can have within Therapeutic Recreation (TR) contexts. Participants will be invited to explore the implications and uses of EML within their TR practice and the roles that these moments can play in the wellbeing of clients.

The Impact of Collaboration between Recreational Therapy and the Center of Performing Arts Medicine on the Skilled Nursing Unit (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Stephanie Janczak & Heather Vokey

Session Description:

The Artist in Residence Program at Houston Methodist Hospital (HMH) began on the Skilled Nursing Unit (SNF) in June 2023 and has positively impacted over 350 patients since. Stephanie Janczak is the CTRS on the SNF and initiated the collaboration with the Center of Performing Arts Medicine at HMH to bring live music to the unit. Emily Klein, MM is the Artist in Residence at Houston Methodist Hospital and she specializes in harp performance. This presentation will share reflections on the positive experiences of patients and staff as a direct result of this collaboration and music integration.

Let's Learn How To WRAP (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Carl Ings

Session Description:

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan is a self-management and recovery system developed by a group of people who had mental health difficulties and wanted to incorporate wellness and coping strategies into their lives. This tool is designed to help increase your self-awareness of what you need to do to help yourself lead a normal life. People who have a WRAP usually find that they have fewer difficult times, or those difficult times are not as bad as they used to be or don't last as long. A plan of action will renew your sense of hope that things can and will get better. You have control over your life and the way you feel.

“The What is to What Will Be...Guidance to Self-Advocacy.” (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Shaun Geise

Session Description:

“Professional self-advocacy refers to the ability to effectively communicate one’s needs, goals, and achievements in the workplace while ensuring that personal and professional interests are represented. This skill is essential for career advancement, workplace satisfaction, and personal growth, as it enables individuals to navigate challenges, negotiate resources, and seek opportunities for development. At its core, professional development and self-advocacy involves a clear understanding of one’s strengths, skills, and aspirations, as well as the confidence to express them to colleagues, managers, or other stakeholders of interest. Effective self-advocacy requires both communication skills and emotional intelligence, as it strikes a balance between asserting oneself and maintaining positive relationships. Individuals must learn how to advocate for themselves in ways that are respectful, assertive, and aligned with organizational goals. Key components of professional self-advocacy include setting clear goals, being proactive in seeking feedback, and leveraging opportunities for growth and recognition. It also involves learning to navigate organizational structures and decision-making processes to effectively influence outcomes. Self-advocacy does not just reflect promotions, or salary increases but also advocating for work-life balance, professional development, and fair treatment within professional representations. By developing self-advocacy skills, professionals can increase their visibility, demonstrate leadership, and build a stronger professional reputation. In today’s competitive job market, those who can advocate for themselves are often better positioned to achieve long-term career success and fulfillment. ”

Changing Canada One Space at a Time: Promoting the Accessible Canada Act in Recreational Therapy (60 Minutes)

Presented by: David Loy

Session Description:

The International Sign of Accessibility (ISA) for designed and implemented in 1968. This symbol or icon represents an image of disability that is outdated and no longer acceptable for the public perception of disability. A new icon has recently been developed and there is a nationwide movement for social change to accept and adopt the new accessibility icon. Recreational therapy has always had a critical role in advocacy and promoting social change for individuals with disabilities. Learn about this new icon of disability accessibility and what the recreational therapy profession can do in Canada to promote this social change.

Pre-Recorded Sessions

Recreational Therapy and Telehealth: Transitioning Care to Meet the Needs of Clients (90 Minutes)

Presented by: Holly Eichner, PhD., CTRS-BH

Session Description:

As healthcare evolves to meet the needs of people in rural locations or without the means to engage in traditional healthcare telehealth becomes a viable option for delivery of Recreational Therapy services. In this session Dr. Eichner will discuss her experience as a telehealth practitioner in an intensive outpatient behavioral health (BH) program for adolescents and adults. A review of literature demonstrating the outcomes of telehealth care will be shared. She will also discuss how to modify traditional recreational therapy evidence-based interventions into telehealth formats to help clients reach their goals.

Stroke Survivor and Practitioner Perspectives on a Newly Developed Neurofeedback Intervention and Insights for Future Co-Design with Gamification (30 Minutes)

Presented by: Christine Ausman

Session Description:

This presentation will demonstrate the advantages of including therapeutic recreation specialists within broader neurorehabilitation research and demonstrates the value of what we bring to highly technical fields.

This session will present findings from a recent study of a newly developed neurofeedback intervention with gamification components to help promote neurorehabilitation and improvements in motor function post-stroke. Stroke survivors and practitioners (including CTRS) were introduced to the intervention and asked their opinion regarding its design and feasibility for clinical use. Findings highlight the importance of patient-oriented research and stakeholder engagement in the development of new interventions, as well as demonstrating the application of therapeutic recreation approaches and concepts within neurorehabilitation.

Clinical Utility of a Content-Screening Tool for Virtual Reality in Long-Term Care (30 Minutes)

Presented by: Rebecca Genoe

Session Description:

Use of Virtual Reality (VR) is growing rapidly in the field of therapeutic recreation. As the profession adopts technology to facilitate leisure experiences, it is important to support Recreation Therapists to identify relevant content that meets the strengths, needs, and interests of clients. In this research presentation we will share findings from our recent studies that aimed to determine the clinical utility of a VR content screening tool for Recreation Therapists in Long-Term Care. Data were collected through an online survey, followed by a nominal group process. Preliminary findings will be shared.

Practicing Compassion, Building Resilience: The Unequivocal Value of Seeing Worth (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Tannis Chartier

Session Description:

Through the development of a Recreation program for Lethbridge's unhoused population, Tannis Chartier has seen the importance of compassion and dignity in the care of all individuals. The purpose of this session is to develop an understanding of the privilege that many practitioners have, establish some of the roots of addiction and homelessness, and to develop a compassionate approach that serves as a catalyst for known worth and positive change with all individuals Therapeutic Recreation professionals encounter. This session includes lived experience.

Inpatient Exposure to Adaptive Sports: A Descriptive Study (30 Minutes)

Presented by: Brittany MacKeen, Katie Marriott

Session Description:

Persons with newly acquired disability may be admitted to an inpatient rehabilitation service for intensive multidisciplinary rehabilitation prior to continuing outpatient rehabilitation. However, it is currently unknown which patients are most likely to be interested in exposure to Adaptive Sports during this time, and how they would like to be exposed to these sports. The objectives of this study are to determine if patients with new injuries want to be exposed personally to Adaptive Sports, to determine if there are patient factors associated with stronger desire regarding this exposure, and if so, how they would prefer to be exposed during this phase. This research will help Recreation Therapy Professionals working in inpatient rehabilitation at the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre determine intervention techniques, approaches, and modalities that support the identified needs of the patient population.

Weaving Pathways of Hope and a Narrative of Wellness within Therapeutic Recreation (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Jennifer Affolder

Session Description:

This session will 1) empower a collective voice for change using a community weaving framework, 2) explore storytelling as both a therapeutic intervention and an evaluation tool, and 3) create a blueprint for health promotion using the narratives we gather as a vehicle to support community connections, collaborative partnerships and the advancement of our profession. We are called to learn from the voices of those we serve, those we collaborate with and those within our profession, with a message of hope, courage and cultural humility.

Perceived Health Quality of Life and Wellbeing Outcomes through Participation in an Adapted Fishing Intervention (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Amanda Ervin

Session Description:

A pilot study was conducted to investigate the impact that participation in one session of adapted fishing (AF) would have on self-perceived health-quality of life (HQOL) and wellbeing in 10 clients. Client diagnoses here included disabilities of physical and mental health. This research used the World Health Organization-Quality Of Life-Brief-26 assessment tool along with the Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale to quantify self-perceived outcomes of AF. Our pre and post data revealed that AF may increase HQOL and wellbeing for clients, volunteers, and family/ caregivers. These findings provide encouraging implications for AF, outdoor recreation, and the ecological approach to therapeutic recreation.

Enhancing Stroke Rehabilitation Through Recreation Therapy with Evidence-Based Practice: Addressing Depression and Anxiety in Acute Care Inpatient Settings (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Riley Wells, Andrea King

Session Description:

This paper explores the connection between stroke rehabilitation, mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety, and the role of recreation therapy in acute care settings. Stroke often leads to significant physical and psychological impacts, complicating recovery and reducing quality of life. Through a literature review and insights from recreation therapy professionals at the Halifax Infirmary, the study identifies key themes and interventions for addressing mental health symptoms in stroke patients. Recreation therapy emerges as a vital component in fostering resilience and improving outcomes, though research gaps remain. The paper highlights the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, evidence-based practices, and advocacy to enhance the role of recreation therapy in holistic stroke rehabilitation.

The Impact of Walking and Horticultural Programs on Health Promotion in Taiwanese Older Adults: A Quasi-Experimental Study (30 Minutes)

Presented by: Pei-Chun Hsieh, Li-Jung Lin

Session Description:

This experimental study evaluated the effectiveness of walking and horticultural programs in dementia prevention among 46 community-dwelling older adults in Taiwan with MMSE scores of 23 or higher. Participants joined either a 12-week walking program (n=26) featuring weekly 90-minute sessions with warm-up, self-paced walking, and cool-down exercises, or a horticultural program (n=20) with weekly 90-minute sessions focused on gardening techniques and skill application. Pre- and post-intervention assessments using culturally-validated tools (LOTCA-G, POMS, and HPLP) showed significant improvements in self-reported health, physical activity levels, and cognitive ability in the walking group. The horticultural group demonstrated significant gains in self-reported health and overall health-promoting lifestyle scores, though they experienced a slight, non-significant decline in cognitive ability. These findings highlight the distinct benefits of each program, suggesting that walking primarily supports cognitive and physical health, whereas horticultural activities foster overall lifestyle enhancements. Both programs merit further longitudinal research and practical implementation.

Exploring Accessible Trails: A Collaborative Approach to Outdoor Recreation (30 Minutes)

Presented by: Chelsea Crockford

Session Description:

This session highlights the early phases of a collaborative research project aims at enhancing access to outdoor recreation for individuals with physical disabilities in New Brunswick. Partnering with the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit, Horizon Health Network's Recreation Therapist and Psychology team, community organizations, and individuals with lived experience, the study seeks to develop a user-friendly universal resource for assessing wheelchair-friendly trails in New Brunswick. Through a needs assessment and community workshops, prioritization of mental health, quality of life, and accessibility of outdoor recreation trails in rural communities. Attendees will gain insights into the values of community-engaged research, the importance of addressing barriers to outdoor adapted leisure, and advancing inclusive practices in therapeutic recreation.

More Purposeful and Mindful Senior Fitness Classes (60 Minutes)

Presented by: Emily Johnson

Session Description:

Engaging seniors in fitness programs should go beyond just movement. By fostering purpose, building knowledge, and cultivating mindfulness we can create a richer, more engaging experience for participants. This presentation will explore practical strategies to make fitness classes more meaningful and empowering for older adults through opportunities for vocation, integrating education and peer support, and incorporating mindfulness practices. By implementing these approaches, you can inspire the seniors you work with to take ownership of their fitness journeys while fostering a supportive and intentional community.



Eugeria Platinum Sponsor

Eugeria is your partner for innovative, dignifying technologies for dementia care. Discover our high-quality, curated and vetted solutions to help you provide person-centered care to your residents living with dementia. Our product portfolio consists of cutting-edge innovations (Tovertafel interactive projector, Crdl music through touch, HUG sensory companion, Idem smart clock, Vireo indoor garden) that are built to the highest quality standards, supported by science, and dignifying. Equip your memory care team to deliver outstanding care for residents with dementia using these innovations!

To Learn More about Eugeria Please Visit: <https://www.eugeria.ca/>