

Therapeutic Recreation

TRO Scope of Practice



Therapeutic Recreation is a collaborative and purposeful process facilitated by trained professionals offering recreation and leisure assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation to achieve individual goals. The profession uses meaningful recreation and leisure education, counselling and experiences to promote, restore, rehabilitate, and/or maintain quality of life and well-being. Therapeutic Recreation supports the development of strengths while addressing social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive needs

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Personal Benefits of Therapeutic Recreation for Mental Health Populations



Aerobic exercise was associated with clinical improvements in patients with depression



Physical activity for persons with schizophrenia resulted in an increase in Vo2max levels, enough to reduce cardiovascular disease by 15% and mortality by 20%



Exercise interventions that are supervised by healthcare professionals, such as Recreation Therapists, show a significant improvement in global cognition amongst people with schizophrenia



Therapeutic hiking programs have lead to significant increases in happiness and energy levels, and significant decreases in anxiety levels in mental health outpatients



Recreation can lead to friendships and increased connectedness for persons with mental illness. It further develops social skills such as cooperation, building trust and communication



Recreation therapists can assist people living with schizophrenia to develop planning and coping skills and increase community involvement



THERAPEUTIC RECREATION IS A STRENGTHS-BASED PROFESSION THAT CONTRIBUTES TO RECOVERY FROM MENTAL ILLNESS

STRENGTHS-BASED



Focusing on a person's strengths and abilities have been proven far more effective in achieving positive growth and change, compared to focusing on deficits

INDIVIDUALIZED & PERSON-CENTRED



Not all leisure activities provide the same outcomes. Structured leisure activities with clear goals and opportunities to interact with others provide meaning and a sense of well-being

HOPE



Leisure activities elicit positive emotions, such as joy and courage. These positive emotions can be seen as a counter-depressant that assists recovery in ways that pharmacological treatments cannot

EMPOWERMENT



Leisure can provide persons with serious mental illness opportunities to go out and socialize which can then lead to the building blocks for positive relationships and meaningful social roles

“Every effort should be made to ensure that inpatients have access to meaningful day time activities and therapeutic programming from the time of admission”

-Lauwers, 2008



BENEFITS OF THERAPEUTIC RECREATION WITHIN MENTAL HEALTH SETTINGS

Healthcare professionals, including Recreation Therapists, have been identified as key practitioners in the prevention of violence within mental health settings

“In addition to the clinical and therapeutic benefits of meaningful activities/programs for clients, the provision of such programming was seen an important component in reducing the use of restraint and seclusion.”

-Restraint Minimization Taskforce, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2008



- Lack of structured activities in psychiatric units and the resulting boredom increases the aggression and violent incidents in the ward and the assaults rise during the evenings and weekends
- Expanding the number and availability of activities and programs for patients on days, evenings and weekends is recommended to help decrease aggressive behaviours
- Meaningful activities are a good option to help address boredom and poor staff-patient engagement on psychiatric wards
- In a national audit on violence, two-thirds of patients did not think there were enough activities available in the evenings and on weekends
- Meaningful recreation activities like community outings, walking programs, and breakfast clubs on inpatient psychiatric units have been linked to a reduction in average length of stay as well as reducing seclusion rates and staff sickness rates
- An important aspect of client care that plays a critical role in the prevention and management of aggression is meaningful client programming and activities



RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Full paper available Summer 2017 at www.trontario.org

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