



Aging with Confidence: The Importance of Therapeutic Recreation to Quality of Life for Seniors in Ontario

Meeting with:

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About TRO

- Formed in 1999
- 1700 members (*student, associate, Professional, Registered Professional, Education Institutions*)
- Volunteer led, member driven
- Members set the direction at the Annual General Meeting



Membership Services

- **Registration Designation (R/TRO and R/TRO DIP)**
 - Demonstrates excellence in the field of Therapeutic Recreation having met the minimum criteria in formal education, practical TR experience, professional contributions and affiliation.
 - Maintenance demonstrates accountability, ensuring professionals stay current in their field through professional contributions and continued learning



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- **Support of Rigorous Applied Research:**
 - Therapeutic Recreation and Practice Research Journal (TRPR) of TRO
 - Published by University of Waterloo, Recreation and Leisure Studies Department



Membership Services

- **Establishment, implementation and maintenance of:**
 - Code of Ethics
 - Essential Competency Framework
 - Standards of Practice
 - Scope of Practice
 - Therapeutic Recreation (TR) and assistant TR role descriptions
- **Educational opportunities:**
 - Annual conference, webinars, regional groups, workshops
- **Advocacy**
 - Advocate on behalf of the profession
- **Information**
 - E-news, website, social media



TRO Scope of Practice

Therapeutic Recreation (TR) 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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What is the Purpose of Therapeutic Recreation?

To enable all individuals to achieve quality of life and optimal health through meaningful participation in recreation and leisure.





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Alzheimer Society
ONTARIO

camh Centre for Addiction
and Mental Health

 **Sunnybrook**
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

 **Epilepsy
Support
Centre**

Where is TR Practiced?

- Hospitals and Rehabilitation Centres
- Addiction and Mental Health Centres
- Long-Term Care
- Continuing Complex Care
- Seniors, Veterans and Dementia Programs – Day and LTC
- Community Health and Disability Day Programs
- Community Health Centres
- Private Practice
- Etc...

Sienna
SENIOR LIVING

Holland Bloorview
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation

 **MARCH
OF DIMES
CANADA**



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- **Therapeutic Recreation Is Not:**
 - Diversional Therapy
 - Activity for the sake of being busy
 - A distraction
- **Therapeutic Recreation Is About:**
 - The difference between living vs. surviving/existing
 - Maintaining continuity in life through valued activities as well as opportunities to grow and develop by discovering new abilities and learning new skills and talents
 - Developing and nurturing strong relationships critical for quality care and support
 - Providing non-pharmacological interventions



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The Process of Therapeutic Recreation:

- ▶ Employs a systematic series of steps to meet the needs of clients/patients/residents:
 - ▶ Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation.



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Research demonstrates that therapeutic recreation, leisure and the arts contributes to:

- **increased positive affect** (Kolanowski, Buettner, Costa, & Litaker, 2001)
- **improvements in functional capacity** (Hsu et al., 2010)
- **increased sense of self and self-worth** (Pedlar, Dupuis, & Gilbert, 1996)
- **decreased responsive behaviours** (Buettner & Fitzsimmons, 2002; Kolanowski, Fick, & Buettner, 2009; Livingston et al., 2005; Richeson, 2012; Sellers, 2005)
- **more positive adjustment to a long-term care home** (Kydd, 2001)
- **decreased loneliness, boredom, and depression** (Buettner & Fitzsimmons, 2002)
- **increased social engagement, “enlivened relationships”, and sense of belonging** (Bernstein, Friedmann & Malaspina, 2015; Crispi & Heitner, 2002; Richeson, 2012; Sellers, 2005; Sullivan, Pedlar, & Piller, 2002)
- **increased life satisfaction, quality of life, and ageing well** (Chung, 2004; Dupuis, 2008; Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Marshall & Hutchinson, 2001; Voelkl, Galecki, & Fries, 1996; Yuen et al., 2008)
- **improved family visits and increased family involvement** ((Buettner, 1999; Dupuis & Pedlar, 1995; Fink & Bedall-Fink, 1986)
- **development and support of relational citizenship** (Dupuis et al., 2016; Kontos, Miller, & Kontos, 2017).



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“There is robust evidence that social isolation and loneliness significantly increase risk for premature mortality, and the magnitude of the risk exceeds that of many leading health indicators.”

-Holt-Lunstad, 2017



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*“The vast majority of seniors surveyed want to age at home and in the community; however, more than half of those surveyed already say they will need help over the next five to ten years to do so, particularly with access to services, transportation, housing options, **wellness, social connections and active engagement.**”*

-Ageing with confidence: Ontario's plan for seniors, p.21

AGING WITH CONFIDENCE: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors

▶ Supporting Seniors Living Independently in the Community

- ▶ More Seniors Active Living Centres - *TR's are trained professionals who are leisure experts with skills of a therapist*
- ▶ More community engagement opportunities – *TR offers a bridge to community engagement*
- ▶ Staying physically strong - *TR's ensure safe, meaningful experience*
- ▶ Engaging seniors through the arts - *TR facilitates therapeutic use of art*
- ▶ Supporting seniors to become mentors – *Pen Pal Project*
- ▶ Helping seniors with technology – *Cyber Seniors*



AGING WITH CONFIDENCE: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors

- ▶ **Seniors Requiring Enhanced Supports at Home and in Their Communities**
 - ▶ Support for more naturally occurring retirement communities - *TR can address social interaction as well as other issues seniors face such as ensuring adequate physical activity, promoting cognitive exercises and providing opportunities to experience positive emotions. TRO has initiated outreach to LHIN's*
 - ▶ Increasing access to in-home health care - *TR is a healthcare provider that can help seniors preventatively with their health to remain in their homes.*

AGING WITH CONFIDENCE: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors

▶ Seniors Requiring Intensive Supports

- ▶ More staffing and support in long-term care - *Qualified TR professionals assess an individual's needs and address them through individual supports or group programs. TR's understand how to address responsive behaviours resulting in the reduction of anti-psychotic medications, falls, restraint usage, pressure ulcers, pain and depression*
- ▶ *In some LTC homes, the ratio of TR professional to resident can be as high as 1:150. More TR staffing is needed.*



To Ensure Seniors Are Thriving in Ontario, TRO Recommends:

1. Access to Therapeutic Recreation Programs and Supports Delivered by Qualified TR Professionals

- ▶ Therapeutic Recreation can mean the difference between thriving rather than existing in the community. TR not only improves quality of life and wellness, but also addresses many of the other pressing issues seniors experience such as social isolation and depression. Therapeutic Recreation must be available and easily accessible by seniors through annualized, dedicated funding in Seniors Active Living Centres. The ratio of TR staff to seniors must be kept at a reasonable level to ensure programs are tailored to address individual needs vs. arbitrary programs which lack a person-centred focus.



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2. Establish hiring standards which include consistent education requirements, job titles and appropriate compensation for TRs.

- ▶ A qualified TR professional has graduated with a degree, diploma or post-graduate certificate from a recognized Recreation Therapy post-secondary program. Excellence is demonstrated through the Registered with TRO designation (RTRO, R/TRO DIP).



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3. Establish a life enrichment protected envelope of funding that would support TR in LTC settings

- ▶ Consistent programming delivered by qualified TR professionals will be vital to the physical, mental and emotional health and well-being of seniors as they transition from community to long-term care homes.



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