

Recreation Therapy Assistant Role Description

The Recreation Therapy Assistant (RTA) role description is designed to serve as a foundation for the practice of Therapeutic Recreation, regardless of setting. This document complements the Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) Standards of Practice and is intended to guide practitioners and employers province wide. As the profession continues to evolve, the role description will reflect changes within the field. The rationale and benefit to utilizing a standardized role description includes the following:

- Defines the scope of practice for Recreation Therapy Assistants
- Encourages consistency across the profession by adhering to the Standards of Practice for TRO
- Ensures professionals meet minimum competencies
- Promotes higher quality of services to clients resulting in a strengthened profession
- Identifies Therapeutic Recreation as a separate and distinct field of practice

RTA's work under the direction of a Recreation Therapist to deliver recreation therapy services. They assist in the delivery of goal-oriented programs and services to meet the leisure related needs of clients. It is important that RTA's work alongside the therapist(s) and contribute to the continuum of therapeutic services. The two main responsibilities of the RTA include: program development and program delivery as well as program observation and reporting, in addition to non-direct client activities. RTA's provide input, which will enable the Recreation Therapist to conduct assessments, develop intervention plans or evaluate a client's progress in relation to the intervention plan.

The RTA will practice in accordance with the Standards of Practice set out by TRO. The Standards of Practice reflect the major functions and competencies for effective performance. RTA's must also perform in accordance with the mission, vision, values and philosophy of the organization they are employed with.

RECOMMENDED QUALIFICATIONS:

Note: Qualifications may vary across employers

- Post-Secondary education in Therapeutic Recreation or related field

RECOMMENDED CREDENTIALS:

- Registration with TRO (R/TRO, R/TRO DIP) or pending

RECOMMENDED AFFILIATIONS:

- Registered / Professional member in good standing with TRO
- Membership with other recreation related organizations (ex. Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association, Recreation Professionals of Ontario, Parks and Recreation Ontario, Older Adult Centres Association etc.)

COMPETENCIES:

Note: The following competencies must be fulfilled in order to apply for the Registration designation. Competencies may vary across employers due to agency requirements and protocols.

1. Therapeutic Recreation Program Development

- In partnership with the Recreation Therapist, collaborate in the design of Therapeutic Recreation programs, considering the client's strengths and abilities
- Provide feedback regarding interventions or services to the Recreation Therapist
- Observations from programs are reported to the Recreation Therapist

2. Therapeutic Recreation Program Delivery

- Assist in implementing recreation participation programs to meet client interests
- Assist in implementing interventions that will meet the specific needs of a client considering his/her strengths and abilities
- Program logistics are considered and planned, such as facilities, financial resources, equipment, and supplies
- Utilize and contribute to the orientation of student and volunteer support
- Report observations from the interventions to the Recreation Therapist
- Encourage caregiver participation where appropriate
- Assist clients to become involved in the community under the direction of the Recreation Therapist

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Note: The following are roles and responsibilities that the RTA may be exposed to. Roles may vary across employers due to agency requirements and protocols.

1. Therapeutic Recreation Assessment

- Report leisure related feedback to the Recreation Therapist from clients and/or caregiver(s) on a day-to-day basis
- Communicate feedback to the Recreation Therapist

2. Therapeutic Recreation Intervention Plan

- Under the direction of the Recreation Therapist, ensure that client goals and intervention plans are met
- Communicate feedback from/about the client to the Recreation Therapist

3. Therapeutic Recreation Documentation

- Have an understanding of the methods of documentation used by the organization
- Information on client interventions is communicated to the Recreation Therapist, who will document accordingly (documentation standards may vary across organizations)
- Workload measurement is completed as required by the organization

4. Therapeutic Recreation Evaluation

- Have an understanding of the methods used to informally evaluate client responses to interventions
- Informal input from the client, caregivers(s) and other members of the healthcare team is sought to assist the Recreation Therapist in the evaluation process
- Feedback is communicated to the Recreation Therapist

5. Therapeutic Recreation Research

- Access and review applicable research related to recreation therapy
- Evidence based research is applied to professional practice under the direction of the Recreation Therapist

6. Therapeutic Recreation Professional Development

- Follow TRO Standards of Practice and related agency practices and theories
- Self-assessments and performance appraisals are conducted to identify personal areas for enhancing knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform job responsibilities
- Participate in in-service training and staff development sessions
- Educational opportunities are sought out and pursued
- Certifications required by national and/or provincial associations(s) and organization of employment are completed and renewed when necessary
- New knowledge and skills are shared with colleagues, volunteers and students if applicable
- Contribute to the understanding of Therapeutic Recreation among others (ex. volunteers, students, allied health professionals)
- Contribute to the Interprofessional Education and Interprofessional Collaboration of the organization if applicable

7. Therapeutic Recreation and Community Practice

- Have an understanding of the concepts of community development and various approaches to building community
- Have an understanding of community recreation participation opportunities and resources available to clients
- When required, collaborate with the Recreation Therapist in linking clients with community services

REFERENCES

Standards of Practice for Therapeutic Recreation (2004). *Therapeutic Recreation Ontario*. Retrieved from <https://trontario.org/tro-professional-documents>

Standards of Practice for Recreation Therapists & Therapeutic Recreation Assistants (2006). *Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.canadian-tr.org/>