



**THERAPEUTIC  
RECREATION  
ONTARIO**

# Live-Stream 2026 TRO Conference Program at a Glance

Monday, June 8	
7:45 - 7:55 AM	Welcome & Announcements
8:00 - 9:00 AM	Keynote: Empower. Engage. Evolve. The power of Caring for Yourself as a Therapeutic Recreation Professional
9:00 - 9:15 AM	Break
9:15 - 10:15 AM	10 Wacky Facts That'll Empower, Engage, and Evolve You as a Recreation Therapist
10:15 - 10:35 AM	Break
10:35 AM - 11:35 PM	Empower and Engage: Best Practice Behavioural Support Resources to Evolve Your Practice
11:35 - 1:10 PM	Lunch & Annual General Meeting (AGM is a separate Zoom link, will be sent at a later time)
1:15 - 2:45 PM	The Dreaded B-Word: Understanding Client Boredom, Motivation, and the Role of Recreation Therapy
3:05 - 4:35 PM	Flourishing Through Leisure: An Application of Strengths-Based Therapeutic Recreation

*\*please note this program is subject to change*

- **PURPLE:** Children & youth
- **PINK:** Long-term care & seniors
- **TEAL:** Research
- **ORANGE:** Applicable to all populations
- **BLUE:** Community
- **GREEN:** Hospital & Rehab
- **YELLOW:** Mental Health

**Tuesday, June 9**

**Visit our Exhibitor Tradeshow booths all day!**

8:00 - 8:15 AM	Energizer (subject to change)
8:15 - 8:30 AM	Q&A with Jeff Burch (subject to change)
8:30 - 10:00 AM	When Relations Matter Most
10:00 - 10:20 AM	Break
10:20 - 11:20 AM	Songs of Strength: How Songwriting Supports Mental Health Recovery in Therapeutic Recreation
11:20 AM - 12:00 PM	Lunch & Awards Presentation
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Official Exhibitor Tradeshow (Check out all our Conference sponsors on the TRO Sponsors page of the website!)
1:05 - 2:05 PM	Recreation Therapy and Transitional Support: Supporting Patients with Complex Discharges
2:05 - 2:25 PM	Break
2:25 - 3:25 PM	Community of Practice meetings (in-person)
3:30 - 3:45 PM	Closing remarks, giveaways/prizes, Exhibitor giveaways

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# 2026 TRO Conference Session Descriptions

## **Keynote: Empower. Engage. Evolve. The power of Caring for Yourself as a Therapeutic Recreation Professional**

~ **Leanne Fitzmaurice**

After working in Long Term Care for over 20 years, Leanne developed a new passion when she became a Certified Facilitator of The Working Mind through Opening Minds, an initiative of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

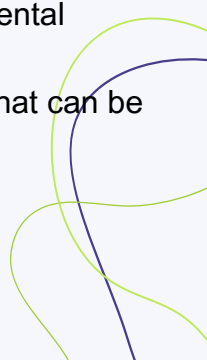
Leanne has always believed that being a good leader means truly looking out for your team. The Working Mind really spoke to her values—and took her leadership to the next level. Through the program, she’s seen how stigma can quietly show up at work, and how powerful it can be when people start talking about it. It’s inspired her to help create workplaces where everyone feels supported, understood, and able to bring their best selves every day.

In addition to The Working Mind, Leanne offers customized workshops and presentations on workplace mental health tailored to your organization’s specific needs. She would be honoured to partner with you to help your team strengthen resilience and thrive.

As Therapeutic Recreation professionals navigate fast-paced and emotionally demanding work environments, it can be easy to overlook changes in their own well-being. Yet practitioner self-awareness and resilience are essential to sustaining ethical, effective, and client-centered practice.

In this keynote session, Leanne invites participants to pause and reflect on their own mental health and professional sustainability. Attendees will explore early warning signs of stress and burnout, examine the unique occupational risks associated with therapeutic recreation practice, and learn practical strategies to support personal resilience and professional longevity.

By strengthening self-awareness and well-being, TR professionals can remain fully present and effective in their roles. This session supports reflective practice and professional responsibility, helping practitioners maintain therapeutic relationships, promote positive client outcomes, and sustain long-term engagement in the field.

1. By the end of the session, participants will be able to identify 4 signs of declining mental health across multiple Domains of Health.
  2. By the end of the session, participants will be able to describe 3 challenges associated with the Therapeutic Recreation professional role and explain how they may impact practitioner mental health
  3. By the end of the session, participants will be able to demonstrate 2 self care techniques that can be implemented during the work day to support practitioner well-being
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## 10 Wacky Facts That'll Empower, Engage, and Evolve You as a Recreation Therapist

~ Emily Johnson

Get ready to laugh, learn, and look at your work through a whole new lens! In this lighthearted yet deeply meaningful session, Emily Johnson takes you on a journey through 10 truly wacky (but real!) facts from nature, science, and the world around us, each one offering a powerful professional takeaway for Recreation Therapists.

From octopuses with three hearts to sunflowers that turn toward each other on cloudy days, you'll discover how these quirky truths can inspire resilience, connection, and creativity in your daily practice. Walk away feeling recharged, reminded of your "why," and equipped with simple mindset shifts to empower yourself, engage your community, and evolve your professional impact.

This session blends laughter, reflection, and practical insight, a perfect reminder that the best lessons in Recreation Therapy often come from the most unexpected places.

1. By the end of this session participants will be able to identify 5 unconventional, yet meaningful lessons that can impact professional growth in Recreation Therapy.
2. By the end of this session participants will be able to integrate one creative or connection-focused concept into therapeutic interactions, groups, or community engagement strategies
3. By the end of this session, participants will be able to apply a minimum of three mindset shifts or teamwork strategies in their professional practice

## Empower and Engage: Best Practice Behavioural Support Resources to Evolve Your Practice

~ Courtney Stasiuk-Mohr

Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) develops tools and resources to empower teams caring for older adults with, or at risk of, responsive behaviours/personal expressions related to dementia, complex mental health, substance use and/or other neurological conditions.

This session will provide an overview of new tools which complement and build upon one another to support person-centred care, holistic assessment, and meaningful engagement.

Assessment tools include My Personhood Summary<sup>®</sup>, a resource that surfaces a person's life experiences, important relationships, and personal preferences, and the BSO-DOS<sup>®</sup>, which provides objective behavioural data. Both support the implementation of non-pharmacological interventions for responsive behaviours.

Complementing these assessments, the Meaningful Engagement Resource Guide offers a range of therapeutic recreation activities and adaptation tips, grounded in personhood and cultural safety.

Clues Causes and Care to Consider for Responsive Behaviours help supports care teams to identify unmet needs being communicated by responsive behaviours, implement preventative strategies, and respond effectively in the moment.

- By the end of this session learners will be able to compare two BSO tools and articulate their applicability to their practice based on setting, service-user population, and available resources.
- By the end of this session learners will be able to identify practical ways to apply two BSO tools using adaptable, person-centred, and culturally safe techniques.
- By the end of this session, learners will be able to identify how and where to access BSO tools for ongoing use in their practice.

## **The Dreaded B-Word: Understanding Client Boredom, Motivation, and the Role of Recreation Therapy**

~ Lindsey Oretan, BA, R/TRO

~ Mary Afable, BA, MA RLS, R/TRO

The session will explore how the word boredom is interpreted, within the context of the utilization of Recreation Therapy and how, as Practitioners, we approach both the experience of the patient, our own professional practice and within the team. Time will also be spent investigating motivational strategies and theories, to enable the Recreation Therapist to better support our patients values.

1. Participants will be able to identify three significant differences between the definitions of boredom and motivation
2. Participants will be able to identify 2 motivational strategies that are evidence -based and applicable to TR practice
3. Participants will be able to share and explain one example of how boredom is expressed in their daily practice and one example of how knowing motivational strategies can impact their daily professional practice through active discussion in small groups.

## **Flourishing Through Leisure: An Application of Strengths-Based Therapeutic Recreation**

~ Alyssa Vanwyck, BA, MA, R/TRO, CTRS

This workshop will take an in-depth look at the Flourishing Through Leisure: An Ecological Extension of the Leisure and Well-Being Model (Anderson & Heyne, 2012) and explore its application to a variety of settings and populations. With a focus on strengths-based therapeutic recreation practice, participants will have the opportunity to explore the components of this model and discover ways to improve client's well-being through the implementation of key ideas and theories rooted in an ecological approach and the social model of disability. Participants will discuss strengths-based assessment techniques, intervention and program development, and ways to enhance client's leisure experiences and development both personal and environmental strengths and resources across five life domains.

- Upon completion of the session, participants will be able to differentiate between the medical model and the social model of disability and identify three ways that a strengths-based therapeutic recreation approach is rooted in the social model
- Upon completion of this session, participants will articulate three ways they can enhance client leisure experiences through the application of the Flourishing Through Leisure model.
- Upon completion of the session, participants will be able to apply an ecological approach by identifying three strengths and resources within the physical and social environment that support client leisure participation.

## When Relations Matter Most

~ Erin Delaney, BA, MA

This workshop is grounded in qualitative research exploring the experiences of nine Recreation Therapists across Canada working in diverse settings. The study used storytelling and visual arts: paint, collage, and digital media to create artistic personifications of death, offering insight into how recreation therapists experience dying, grief, and care. Drawing from this research, the interactive workshop introduces artistic personification of death as a reflective, practice-based tool.

Participants will engage in creative reflection, explore death as a relational process, and gain strategies to support grief processing, ritual, and relationship-centred end-of-life care. Findings highlight the emotional labour of frequent exposure to death, role restrictions within fragmented healthcare systems, and limited formal training. Despite these challenges, recreation therapists demonstrated resilience, fostering moments of dignity, beauty, and connection. Their artistic personifications revealed the complex entanglement of solace and finality, underscoring the vital role Recreation Therapist play in shaping the experience of end-of-life.

1. By the end of the session, learners will describe and interpret at least three ways Recreation Therapists experience and personify death across diverse healthcare settings
2. By the end of this session, learners will identify and articulate a minimum of two practical strategies to support Recreation Therapists in managing personal and professional grief and facilitating end-of-life conversations
3. By the end of this session, learners will create one simple Recreation Therapy idea or activity that helps support emotional connection or relationships for people at the end of life.

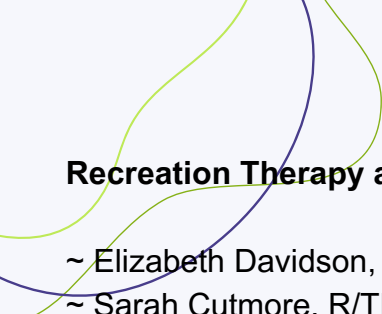
## Songs of Strength: How Songwriting Supports Mental Health Recovery in Therapeutic Recreation

~ Regina Wasalinska-Hannah, R/TRO

~ Katie DuTemple, BFA

This session explores how songwriting can support recovery and confidence-building in Therapeutic Recreation practice. Drawing from a pilot study at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), participants completed the Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Scale before and after a single-session songwriting workshop co-facilitated by a Recreation Therapist and musician. Results showed increases in competence, with participants reporting greater confidence, improved mood, and emotional release. Using Self-Determination Theory as a framework, the session will share program design, key findings, and adaptable strategies — including rewriting familiar lyrics, co-facilitating with artists, and guided reflection. Attendees will also engage in a brief songwriting activity to experience creativity as a pathway to recovery and connection.

- By the end of this session, participants will be able to describe how the songwriting program was structured and facilitated, and how a single creative session can build confidence and support recovery in a mental health setting.
- By the end of this session, participants will be able to identify at least two creative strategies, such as rewriting familiar lyrics or using guided reflection, to help clients express themselves and feel more connected.
- By the end of this session, participants will be able to describe how simple evaluation tools, such as pre/post measures and participant reflections, can be used to demonstrate outcomes and strengthen creative programming in TR.



## **Recreation Therapy and Transitional Support: Supporting Patients with Complex Discharges**

~ Elizabeth Davidson, BA, R/TRO

~ Sarah Cutmore, R/TRO

Due to the growing needs of the geriatric population on the Complex Care Unit at Norfolk General Hospital, TR services have evolved to support patients with extended hospital stays and neurocognitive disorders, including those whose responsive behaviours complicate LTC placement. This presentation will highlight the role of Recreation Therapy in supporting patients from admission through discharge, including the development of transitional support into LTC homes. Attendees will learn how TR services integrate behavioural supports, person-centred care, assessment and intervention planning, interdisciplinary communication, documentation, patient and family advocacy, and community relations to improve discharge outcomes and enhance connections between the hospital and LTC settings.

1. By the end of this session learners will be able to identify 3 benefits of Therapeutic Recreation Staff supporting patients with their transition from hospital to LTC.
  2. By the end of this session learners will be able to provide 3 strategies that Therapeutic Recreation staff can do to facilitate successful patient transitions to LTC.
  3. By the end of this session learners will be able to identify 2 patient care needs that contribute to a complex discharge and describe TR interventions that can support these patients.
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