



Newly Certified: CTRS® Spotlight



Skylar Spencer CTRS

National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification® (NCTRC®) is proud to spotlight Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists®. Go to [NCTRC.org](https://www.nctrc.org) to learn more about NCTRC and the CTRS credential. Read Skylar's CTRS story below.

Tell us about your journey to become a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist® (CTRS).

I learned about Recreational Therapy (RT) while working at my hometown parks and recreation department in MA under CTRS, Kate DeAngelis. Kate told me all about what it took to become a CTRS, and I was hooked! I then attended the University of North Carolina Wilmington and received my Bachelor of Arts in Recreation Therapy. While at UNCW, Dr. Brent Hawkins, CTRS, LRT, taught me about the importance of earning and maintaining my CTRS. Dr. Hawkins has been an inspiration to me in the field and taught me that while serving patients is a priority, we must also serve and give back to our profession. The first step in giving back to my profession is obtaining my CTRS credential from NCTRC to show that I possess the entry-level knowledge required to uphold the standards of practice within the therapeutic recreation profession.

Tell us why becoming a CTRS was an important step in your professional journey and/or career.

Last year I had the honor of attending the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) conference as a Peg Connolly scholar.

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Skylar Spencer *(continued)*

While I knew I wanted to eventually obtain my CTRS credential, hearing from professionals in the field about the importance of this certification left me feeling even more passionate about doing so. Becoming a CTRS is an important step in my ability to obtain my LRT as well. This allows me to serve patients and participants in North Carolina. Now that I am a CTRS, I can assure those I work with that I am competent and qualified to provide them with RT services.

Tell us how you felt when you passed the NCTRC Certification Exam and why that accomplishment was important to you.

Learning that I had passed the NCTRC Certification Exam was a moment of pride for me as it affirmed that I have the knowledge and am competent to provide RT services. Knowing that the work I had put in while at UNCW had paid off and now I have the ability to work as a CTRS and make a difference in my community, was extremely rewarding.

What advice or words of wisdom would you give others who are on the path to professional certification through NCTRC and want to earn the CTRS credential.

My biggest recommendation for those working to acquire their CTRS credential is to be as involved as possible. The hands-on experience I had was the most impactful preparation I did prior to taking the NCTRC Certification Exam. The more you work or volunteer under CTRSs around you, the more you will learn about the expectations and requirements that you will be tested on during the exam, and those are also the skills and knowledge that you must maintain as a professional.

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Skylar Spencer *(continued)*

Tell us why you believe professional certification is important and valuable within the therapeutic recreation profession.

Earning and maintaining professional certification acts as proof that recreational therapists possess a baseline standard of knowledge and have the ability to provide impactful and important services. This professional certification helps validate the importance of the work we do to the greater community around us.

Share how being a CTRS has or will set you apart from others in the RT field.

Being a CTRS will allow me to access important professional resources and jobs. By having the CTRS credential, I am able to show employers and professionals in related positions the quality of the services I can provide and the knowledge that I possess.