

What is recreation therapy?

Recreation Therapy is a health profession which takes a person-centred, strengths-based, evidence-informed approach to practice. Recreation therapists and recreation therapy assistants use recreation and other leisure-based interventions to address the assessed needs of clients with illness and/or disabling conditions to enhance psychological and physical health, recovery, and well-being. (CTRA, 2022; NCTRC, 2022)

There is a growing body of research supporting evidence-based practice. Some of the more common benefits of recreation therapy are:

Physical Benefits

Pain reduction; improvement in muscular strength, flexibility and balance; improved gross and fine motor skills; decreased blood pressure; better range of motion; improved coordination

Cognitive Benefits

Increased attention span; enhanced memory; reduced confusion; enhanced executive functioning; increased awareness and alertness

Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Benefits

Improved stress management; enhanced body image and attitude toward disability; improved social and communication skills; decreased feelings of loneliness, boredom, & expressive behaviours; reduced fear, anxiety, and depression; enhanced coping skills; increased sense of belonging; increased community involvement; increased social support systems

Recreation Therapists provide support in treating age-related injuries, illnesses, and conditions, offering guidance and care to promote well-being.

According to the Government of Canada Job Bank, as of December 2024, job prospects for recreation therapists are expected to be either moderate or good in all 7 markets where a determination could be made.



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Why you should hire a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist

National Council for Therapeutic
Recreation Certification®

Protecting and Promoting Since 1981

CTRS® –The Qualified Provider

The CTRS credential is the only international certification designed to protect the consumer of recreation therapy services. The CTRS credential has been developed and accredited based on accepted standards for certifying agencies and the following established criteria:

- NCTRC certification standards are based on the knowledge and skills necessary for practice within a wide range of service sectors, as verified by national job analysis research.
- Each CTRS has met rigorous professional eligibility requirements and has passed a national certification exam which has established norms for both validity and reliability.
- Each CTRS completes a recertification program designed to ensure continued competence in order to maintain the credential.
- Each CTRS must comply with NCTRC's professional practice and disciplinary requirements. NCTRC serves as a clearinghouse for addressing disciplinary issues within the profession of therapeutic recreation.

For more information about the CTRS credential please visit nctrc.org

Recreation therapy and the CTRS credential are recognized by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), Joint Commission (JC), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Accreditation Canada, the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD), Australian Recreational Therapy Association, as well as in federal, provincial, and state legislation.



Why should you hire a CTRS?

- As an employer, you want to hire the most qualified recreation therapy professional available.
- The CTRS credential is the oldest and most well-recognized credential within the field.
- Certification by NCTRC demonstrates to the public and employers that the recreation therapist has a minimum of a bachelor's degree, has passed the national certification exam and met the requirements for training, skills and knowledge recognized as essential for recreation therapy practice.
- In healthcare, community, residential, long-term care, and school settings where professional credentials and training are indicators of quality, the CTRS designation is recognized as the benchmark of quality and credentialing within recreation therapy, providing additional value-added services that include:

Training and demonstrated abilities in core therapy skills including assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation and documentation

Extensive knowledge and skill-based training to enhance quality of life for persons served

Multi-functional and diversified skill base to reach a wider spectrum of consumers

Training in group-oriented processes to enhance cost effectiveness and efficiencies in service delivery

Assurance that staff qualifications are in compliance with accreditation standards, health districts and legislative requirements



About NCTRC: Dedicated to Professional Excellence

Established in 1981, the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) is a non-profit, international organization dedicated to professional excellence for the protection of consumers through the certification of recreation therapists.

Professional recognition as a CTRS is granted by NCTRC to individuals who apply and meet established standards for certification, including education, experience, successful completion of the NCTRC exam and continuing professional development.

In addition, NCTRC provides credential verification services to employers. Use of these services is strongly encouraged by NCTRC to monitor personnel adherence to the standards of the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.

NCTRC is a charter member organization of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). NCTRC is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).