



# International CTRS® Spotlight



## Shinichi Nagata, CTRS Japan

National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification® (NCTRC®) is proud to spotlight Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists who are making a difference in recreational therapy around the world! Go to [NCTRC.org](https://www.nctrc.org) to learn more about NCTRC and the CTRS credential.

Shinichi Nagata has been a CTRS since 2015 and is currently an Associate Professor in Japan. Read Shinichi's CTRS story below.

**Tell us how being a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist® (CTRS) has impacted your career, your ability to provide qualified professional recreational therapy services, and provide a level of protection for consumers of RT services.**

I am working at University of Tsukuba in Japan. My affiliated institution is called the Institution of Health and Sport Sciences, and I am a faculty member of Adapted Physical Education and Sport Lab. Unfortunately, Japan does not have an established job market for recreational therapists, and our university does not have the course for that. However, I believe my role is to teach our students the essence of recreational therapy so that the people they serve can flourish through leisure. I teach Foundation of Therapeutic Recreation in a Master-level program for those who aim to be a professional in an international development field. As we all know, public support in international development has been in crisis, although their work is critical for the health and well-being of the nations they serve as well as social justice on a global scale. In addition to the APIE process, I teach them the concept of leisure, which all of the students claim was eye-opening. With that knowledge, I believe, students can explore and find truly meaningful activities with the local people they serve.

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## Shinichi Nagata (*continued*)

In addition to lecture courses, I also teach activity courses. I affiliate with the Physical Education Center at the university, where we provide required physical education courses for graduation. I teach a course that is set up for students with disabilities. The students who are participating in my course have a diverse range of diagnoses. There I use skills that I learned in preparation for earning my CTRS credential to conduct an assessment before the class, discuss common interests and plan activities with a small group, facilitate the activities as I implement the plan and evaluate the outcomes as we go. Many students reported finding activities that they like for their future well-being albeit they tend not to have the previous fulfilling experience in physical education. I think it is all thanks to the training and certification of CTRS.

### **Tell us about your professional achievements and other stories of impact as a CTRS.**

I am also a researcher, studying ways to support individuals with mental health challenges to find activities they love. With collaboration with Temple University Collaborative, we have been developing an intervention called the Power of Dependable Souls (PODS). The original ideas came from elsewhere, but one key thing is discussion of their activity interests to find people who have a shared activity interest. I think this is strongly influenced by myself being a CTRS. Thus far, we have established a manual of the PODS: <https://tucollaborative.org/inclusion-practices/the-power-of-dependable-souls/> and we have published a research paper on the essence of the PODS (<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/prj0000649>). I think it is truly important to assist people of all abilities in finding activities they love, and my CTRS certification really helps me doing so.

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## Shinichi Nagata (*continued*)

### **Tell us about any specific challenges you face as a provider of recreational therapy services.**

Medical reimbursement system does not include leisure and recreation – which is a common problem across the globe. But in addition to that, I think, Japanese people tend to think the services for people with disabilities should be free, which can make it difficult to pursue self-funding model of care.

### **Tell us why professional certification is important and valuable in the country where you live & work.**

In Japan, as I said, recreational therapy is not an established job, however, I feel that recreational therapy can contribute hugely to health and well-being of Japanese people. While the culture shift has been in motion, Japanese culture still sees work as most important and leisure as less important in life. Because of such ideology, older people who retire from their job often lose meaning and purpose in life. But there are not many professionals who can help finding activities they like, which can lead them to withdrawal. There are significant opportunities for recreational therapy. I feel that having CTRS certification is important because of visibility and trust. Particularly, in Japanese culture, certification is something people look at and respect.