

**COMPETENCY PROFILE  
FOR  
RECREATION THERAPISTS  
IN  
ALBERTA**

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# Competency Profile for Recreation Therapists in Alberta



The Competency Profile for Recreation Therapists in Alberta delineates the range of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes of recreation therapy practice in Alberta. The competencies of recreation therapists are expected to have some overlap with other health professions.

#### **A: Essential Competencies:**

*Essential for providing safe, ethical, effective and efficient patient care upon entry to practice.*

##### Therapeutic Recreation Assessment

- Identify information necessary to be collected during therapeutic recreation assessment.
- Select appropriate assessment tools based on patient profile and agency/program mandate.
- Use appropriate interview and observational techniques when administering the selected assessment tools.
- Accurately analyze and interpret results of the assessment tools administered.
- Communicate therapeutic recreation assessment results with the patient, family, key support networks and treatment team.
- Apply assessment findings to the therapeutic recreation intervention plan.

##### Therapeutic Recreation Intervention Plan

- Develop a relevant intervention plan based on an established therapeutic recreation theoretical model.
- Identify measurable, patient-centred goals based on assessment results and individual learning preferences.
- Select appropriate therapeutic recreation interventions that will facilitate goal attainment.
- Utilize a collaborative model with patient, family, key support networks and treatment team.

##### Therapeutic Recreation Program Development

- Implement a patient-centred approach to program development.
- Apply therapeutic recreation intervention based upon a continuum model of care and theoretical foundations of practice.
- Develop and apply appropriate evaluation techniques.
- Assess and access program resources as required.
- Develop outcomes that directly relate to patient profile and external diversity considerations.
- Collaborate with the patient and relevant support networks during therapeutic recreation program development.

### Therapeutic Recreation Program Delivery

- Deliver programs taking into account the strengths, abilities and any contraindications imposed by patient diagnosis.
- Initiate and facilitate emergency response procedures in appropriate situations.
- Incorporate data derived from the therapeutic recreation assessment into program delivery.
- Apply facilitation techniques and adapt them as required to match the intervention plan.
- Identify and access relevant resources to achieve maximum patient independence.
- Ensure therapeutic recreation program delivery follows agency policies, procedures and budgetary guidelines.

### Therapeutic Recreation Documentation

- Document in a manner that meets specific professional, agency and/or government requirements.
- Utilize patient-specific information to form appropriate patient-centred outcomes and record progress toward their realization.
- Identify and record useful data in a clear, professional and accurate manner.
- Document behaviourally using agency-specific terminology.

### Therapeutic Recreation Evaluation

- Interpret and apply agency and/or government evaluation protocols accurately into therapeutic recreation service delivery.
- Implement outcome-oriented evaluation measures.
- Acquire and apply formal and informal information from a variety of sources to the evaluation process.
- Analyze and interpret evaluation findings.
- Write evaluation reports.
- Establish efficacy of therapeutic recreation services based on evaluation results and convey the findings to relevant groups/stakeholders.

### Therapeutic Recreation Professional Development

- Practice the guidelines and policies as stated in therapeutic recreation literature and documentation.
- Provide intervention that incorporates and embrace the theories, practices and philosophies behind therapeutic recreation.
- Contribute and participate in the development and growth of therapeutic recreation.
- Provide current and high quality practice through application of current therapeutic recreation materials obtained through a variety of sources (conferences, courses, research articles, seminars etc).

## Therapeutic Recreation and Community Practice

- Seek, support and develop appropriate partnerships with a range of community service providers.
- Facilitate connections with community services needed for transition to and/or independent participation within the community of the patient.
- Collect and compile data necessary in linking with community resources.
- Provide intervention in a variety of community settings and/or involve the community within the patient's environment.
- Demonstrate safe and appropriate procedures for accessing the community.
- Recruit, maintain, support and monitor volunteers.
- Foster mutual respect and open communication to enhance the growth of social networks and informal support mechanisms.
- Conduct evaluations of community-based programs to ascertain compatibility with individual preferences and needs.

## Communication

- Communicate therapeutically with patients and families/supports by responding with information and feedback, offering support and demonstrating skills in listening, clarifying and responding.
- Provide clear, concise and timely information in written or verbal formats to team members and other agencies or health providers as appropriate to communicate patient goals, assessment outcomes, intervention plan, discharge plan, safety or care concerns.
- Utilize alternative forms of communication to ensure an effective exchange of information with a patient and accommodates for patient ability with comprehension and self-expression.

## Problem Solving

- Demonstrate initiative and knowledge to examine resources and solutions to solve or adapt a situation within a health service team and/or address a patient care concern.
- Know when to access or utilize supports, supervisors, mentors and other health professionals to resolve an issue or concern impacting professional practice or patient care.

## Patient-Centred Care

- Utilize individualized assessment and determine individualized intervention based on needs, preferences, strengths and goals.
- Identify patient-centred goals that lead to outcomes that are meaningful and relevant to the patient and their family, supports and community.

## Risk Management

- Systematically identify, analyze, evaluate, eliminate or reduce risk to patient, colleagues, public and self.
- Develop and document program delivery protocols that identify and accommodate for likely or unlikely risk to patients, colleagues, public and self occurring as a result of an intervention, treatment environment, equipment usage, patient-to-staff ratio and/or level of training.
- Handle all incidents, claims, insurance and litigation-related tasks accurately, honestly and in a time-sensitive manner.
- Follow agency and/or government policies and standards for infection prevention and control to protect self, patients, students, volunteers, families, visitors and colleagues from infectious disease transmission.
- Follow agency and/or government policies and standards for occupational health and safety including identifying and reporting hazards, determining and following communication and emergency response plans and reporting all incidents including accident or injury to self or patient, exposure to blood and bodily fluids, exposure to infectious disease and/or exposure to chemicals or hazardous materials.

## Therapeutic Relationships and Boundaries

- Maintain a professional boundary to protect vulnerable patients from being improperly manipulated, treated unequally or treated without the ability to exercise informed consent and decision-making.
- Avoid any type of dual relationship with the patient whereby the patient fulfills a second role with the recreation therapist such as friend, business partner or romantic partner.
- Establish appropriate boundaries during assessment to ensure that testing protocols are followed and assessment results are accurate and reliable without being inappropriately skewed by blurred boundaries of coaching or encouraging during assessment.

## Professional Judgement

- Work within the level of training for a recreation therapist and within level of experience and expertise.
- Know when to call upon, or refer to, other professionals and supervisors when patients appear to be at high risk, or issues are arising that recreation therapists are not trained to manage.
- Recognize fluctuating stability in patient condition and medication responses requiring quick assessment, intervention or adaptation to treatment plans.

## **B: Growth Competencies:**

*Obtained through ongoing education, worksite training, professional development and the broadening of the profession within interprofessional health teams in order to improve effectiveness, diversity and accountability in patient care.*

### Best practice

- Incorporate a combination of the best known evidence for a diagnostic group and the best experience of the professional working with the group in assessment and treatment.
- Think critically before applying newly obtained knowledge into practice related to the benefit or harm to the patient, the implications to the service team and the appropriateness to the service or agency mandate.
- Consult and collaborate with other health professionals and recreation therapists to ensure knowledge and treatment are current and standardized.

### Therapeutic Recreation Research

- Accurately apply agency and/or government guidelines to therapeutic recreation research initiatives.
- Utilize suitable research methods and a variety of sources to collect quantitative and/or qualitative data.
- Analyze research results and incorporate relevant findings within therapeutic recreation service delivery.
- Establish therapeutic recreation services based on research findings.
- Communicate findings either by writing in journals or professional newsletters, or verbally in professional forums.

### Cultural competence

- Respect diversity during patient care and within work environment.
- Use assessment tools, interview techniques and treatment options that consider the diversity of patients with respect to language, ethnicity, values, beliefs, and cultural traditions.
- Avoid imposing or perpetuating biases and stereotypes on a patient, based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, living conditions, disability or diagnosis.
- Use certified health interpreters and translated materials where available.

### Technology

- Utilize various technologies required for competent, timely, effective and ethical practice.
- Use technology in a confidential and ethical manner to prevent inappropriate access to, or disclosure of patient information.
- Use technology to increase competence in research, evaluation, best practice and professional development.

## Critical Thinking

- Use a combination of knowledge, facts, experience, clinical reasoning and expert judgement to analyze situation and make appropriate decisions.
- Use a systematic, logical and coherent process to analyze different scenarios to come up with the best action.
- Use knowledge-based skills in flexible problem-solving, self-evaluation, initiation, self-monitoring and self-awareness.

## Professional Accountability

- Identify self as a recreation therapist during all patient interactions through verbal introduction and work identification.
- Explain your profession and an overview of competencies upon patient introduction and as requested through patient interactions.
- Engage in effective and ethical treatments that demonstrate the competencies of the profession of recreation therapy.
- Avoid misrepresentation of competencies or engaging in patient activities that are beyond competencies or increase harm to the patient.
- Know when and how to refer to, or consult other recreation therapists or health service professionals as appropriate and consented to ensure safe and ethical patient treatment.
- Reflect on, and self-evaluate practice on an ongoing basis to assess competence, limitations, boundaries of training and expertise, areas for further education.

## Clinical Specialties

- Complete training via workshops, certifications and courses in specific treatment modalities, including but not limited to, exercise for seniors, solution-focused therapy, motivational interviewing, group therapy, counselling, suicide risk assessments, cognitive-behavioural therapy, dialectical-behavioural therapy and adventure therapy to safely and competently perform more diverse interventions to meet patient needs.

## Interdisciplinary Assessment and Intervention

- Utilize team-focused assessment and intervention processes to meet the interdisciplinary focus of a service/program and which increase efficiency in patient care.
- Use appropriate interview and observational techniques when administering interdisciplinary assessment tools.
- Accurately analyze and interpret results of the assessment tools administered.
- Communicate interdisciplinary assessment results with the patient, family, key support networks and treatment team.
- Apply assessment findings to the team-based intervention plan.



## Case Management

- Coordinate the care, services and treatment plan for a patient according to agency/ program mandate.
- Act as a consistent and reliable contact for patients and families/supports to address needs and provide education.
- Ensure timely and effective communication with other team members, agencies and/or health providers.

## Interprofessional Collaboration

- Take an active role in assessment, interventions and goal setting within a team of professionals from two or more disciplines.
- Maintain timely and meaningful communication with the team members and a clear understanding of competencies of other professions in order to ensure safety to the patient and trust among the treatment team.

## **C: Leadership Competencies:**

*Advance the training of new professionals and the role of recreation therapists as leaders in the provision of safe, efficient and patient-centred health service delivery.*

## Clinical Supervision and Mentoring

- Engage in clinical supervision of junior members and students of the profession to improve the competencies of emerging professionals in recreation therapy.
- Engage in mentoring relationships throughout years of practice to increase knowledge, skills and abilities of colleagues and junior members of the profession.
- Know when to terminate clinical supervision or mentoring relationships in cases of completion of goals, inappropriate relationships, conflict of interest, no longer able to effectively supervise such as illness, extended absence, change in health or change in position.

## Teaching

- Advance the knowledge within the profession through teaching members and students of the profession through a variety of education venues.
- Advance the knowledge of the profession among the public interprofessional teams, health agencies and community stakeholders through a variety of education venues.

## Leadership

- Perform assigned or inherent roles to guide and improve health service delivery in areas of professional practice, safe and ethical patient care, interprofessional collaboration and accountability to patients, agency and/or government.

## Innovation

- Demonstrate enthusiasm, insight and forward-thinking within the health service team to learn and adopt best practice into treatment, increase efficiencies in patient care and advance professional practice.

## **ATRA's Statement on Restricted Activities – Upon application for regulation under the Alberta Health and Wellness, Health Professions Act, August 2010**

Within the competency Clinical Specialties, recreation therapists practicing in specialised services such as acute inpatient psychiatry may be trained and supervised by regulated health professionals to perform *psychosocial intervention* as a restricted activity. As an unregulated profession, supervision by regulated health providers must meet the supervisors' college regulations.

ATRA acknowledges that specified activities which pose a significant risk to a patient's physical and/or psychosocial well-being such as *psychosocial intervention* require a high level of professional competence to be performed safely. Upon regulation, the practice of recreation therapy will focus on competent practice to ensure patient safety before requesting authorization to perform *psychosocial intervention* as a restricted activity. The proposed college will give future consideration to the development of a competency process for selected recreation therapists to provide *psychosocial intervention* as a restricted activity.

While recreation therapists in Alberta are not requesting authorization to perform *psychosocial intervention* as a restricted activity at this time, there remains a risk to the public if recreation therapy remains unregulated due to the specialised training required to perform activities such as counselling, utilizing psychosocial techniques and addressing psychosocial issues with patients and families:

1. Recreation therapists use counselling as a facilitation technique for treatment, which is not currently classified as a restricted activity. Most recreation therapists are trained to use counselling techniques to provide emotional support, to build rapport with patients, families or supports and to improve patient interventions and outcomes based on individual and environmental beliefs, attitudes and influences.
2. Recreation therapists use psychosocial techniques or approaches within their interventions which are not restricted activities. Many recreation therapists are specially-trained in cognitive-behavioural, motivational interviewing and solution-focused techniques to promote behaviour change and reconnection with pleasurable and meaningful activities.

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