

**Illinois Recreation Therapy Association
Annual Conference**

The Double Tree Hotel Chicago/Alsip
5000 W. 127th Street, Alsip, IL 60803
November 11, 2024

7:30 – 8:15 am

Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:15 – 8:30 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Room: To be assigned

Dorothea S. DiGuido, MS, CTRS, CPRP, ILRTA Treasurer
Marcia Jean Carter, ReD, CTRS, University of St. Francis, Joliet, IL; Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI; SUNY Cortland, Cortland, NY, Adjunct online faculty. Editor-in-Chief, Therapeutic Recreation Journal.

8:30 – 9:30 am

Helping Therapeutic Recreation Professionals Build Resiliency and Avoid Burnout (.1 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speaker:

Kris Johnson, Associate Professor, Aurora University, Aurora, IL

Session Description:

With the acute labor shortages in the post-pandemic landscape, the wellbeing of many recreational therapists may have reached a tipping point as the number of therapists who are struggling with stress, burnout, and loneliness has skyrocketed. This session will provide participants with a unique understanding of trends relating to resiliency in professional practice, so that recreational therapists are able to build resiliency and avoid burnout in a profession that is often considered a vocation.

9:30 – 11:00 am

Communication Challenges and Strategies for Helping People with Dementia (.15 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speakers:

Molly Hofer, MA, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension, Chicago, IL
Kara Schweitzer, MS, CTRS, CDP, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension, Sterling, IL

Session Description:

When a client has dementia, communication can be very difficult as the disease advances. Forgetfulness, agitation, repetition, and mood fluctuations can make situations stressful and frustrating, and many healthcare professionals and family members worry that they will say or do the wrong thing and make matters worse. Come and learn about common communication problems caused by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and strategies for better interactions and interventions.

The Tipping Point: Assessing at a Deeper Level for TR Delivery (.15 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speaker:

Sue Myllykangas, PhD, CTRS, Professor, Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

Session Description:

This session offers an opportunity to stretch our understanding of assessments to a deeper level. Older adults reach a tipping point where they can no longer function in the environments they are in without assistance. This session will delve into the need to conduct an environmental assessment as it relates to participation in the interventions we design. There may be deeper reasons your older participants aren't coming to your programs.

***Promoting the Value of RT through a Lived Experience of a Person with COVID and TBI
(.15 CEUs)***

Room: To be assigned

Speakers:

Patricia K. Thomas, MPA, CTRS, Clinical Associate Professor, TR Certificate Coordinator, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM)

Timothy K. Behrens, PhD, CHES, RFSA, FACSM (via Zoom)

Ericka Ruck, CTRS, CBIS, Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital, Milwaukee, WI

Session Description:

Development of professional relationships that include education of external and internal stakeholders about RT, is the highest frequency task of a CTRS as indicated in the 2021 NCTRC Job Analysis. The lived experience of an individual is a compelling way to educate and promote the value and positive outcomes of RT. This session will focus on the significant life of an individual living with brain injury as a result of COVID. RT interventions were a pivotal part of his rehabilitation and return to employment in higher education. Time will be devoted to group discussion on how to create agency or program specific elevator speech narratives using the formula outlined by Hinton/Wilson in the ATRA Newsletter, 2018.

11:00 – 11:15 am BREAK

11:15 – 12:15 pm

Using Therapeutic Recreation Skills to Create Environments Where Everyone Feels Seen, Heard, and Valued (.1 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speakers:

Jennie Stoner, MS, CTRS, CDP, CMDCP, Consultant, Inspire Consulting Services, LLC, St. Charles, IL

Tracey Crawford, CTRS, CPRP, Executive Director, Northwest Special Recreation Association, Rolling Meadows, IL

Session Description:

This session will focus on strategies to combat belonging, uncertainty, and social isolation. This includes identifying disparities, and using situation crafting to build relationships and create environments where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued, regardless of their diverse backgrounds.

Off to a Running Start (.1 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speaker:

Dixie McGary, MS, CDP, CTRS, Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, Mosaic Life Care, Maryville, MO

Session Description:

The world, for a new CTRS professional presents an opportunity for a new adventure. They've completed their coursework, internship requirements, and they've earned their degree. They've passed their CTRS exam, and they've secured a coveted position in the professional arena. You're excited to fill the open position you've been covering. You've got their desk ready, computer set up, the patients/clients are waiting...but are our new professionals truly ready to jump in with both feet?

As seasoned professionals, we sometimes become so focused on serving our clients/participants and following the APIE process, we overlook our role as a mentor. What is our role as experienced professionals? How do we strengthen working relationships? Are we ensuring our new professionals have the necessary tools for workplace success? What issues and challenges are the mentor, as well as the new professional experiencing? How do we strengthen the success of each CTRS within our workforce?

12:15 – 1:45 pm LUNCH

1:45 – 2:45 pm

The Role of Recreational Therapy in the Inclusivity Movement for the LGBTQAI2S+ Community (.1 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speakers:

Kris Johnson, Associate Professor, Aurora University, Aurora, IL
Tracey Crawford, CTRS, CPRP, Executive Director, Northwest Special Recreation Association, Rolling Meadows, IL

Session Description:

Recreational therapists have the ability to create inclusive environments where people are able to find a sense of belonging. Perhaps the newest frontier in the diversity, equity, and

inclusion movement has been with the LGBTQAI2S+ community in recreational therapy departments/programs.

Advancements and Implications of AI in Therapeutic Recreation Education and Practice (.1 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speaker:

Patricia Thomas, MPA, CTRS, Clinical Associate Professor, TR Certificate Coordinator, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM)

Session Description:

ChatGPT – Generative artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence by machines or computer systems. In recent years, the use of generative AI has increased in both higher education and healthcare. This rise in AI adoption has brought to light both positive and negative aspects. This session will focus on the applications and potential concerns of AI in the Therapeutic Recreation (TR) profession. Examples in both areas will be explored. Participants will be asked to discuss implications of AI use in various TR settings.

1:45 – 3:35 pm

Check! Basic Digital Access in RT (.2 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speaker:

Marsha Schwanke, MS, CTRS, Web Specialist, Southeast ADA Center, DeForest, WI

Session Description:

Providing accessible materials online and in-print is integral in providing effective communication, equal opportunity and non-discrimination in RT service delivery. Everyone in RT can and has a role of including digital access from the start to throughout the APIED process of Assessment, Planning, Intervention, Evaluation and Documentation. There is also necessity given the legality under laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the recent rule on digital access for Title II entities. Come discover eight checkpoints and best practices for providing digital access in RT. Then put those checkpoints in action as we evaluate some common examples and features of digital materials used in TR programs, research, and media.

2:45 – 3:00 pm BREAK

3:00 – 4:30 pm

Your Story Matters: Life Review as a Therapeutic Intervention Technique (.15 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speakers:

Molly Hofer, MA, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension, Chicago, IL
Kara Schweitzer, MS, CTRS, CDP, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension, Sterling, IL

Session Description:

The life review process described by Dr. Robert Butler as a necessary developmental task of aging correlates with the therapeutic methods of reminiscence or sharing life stories. This session will cover the importance of sharing our stories, not only as a potential family legacy, but also as a therapeutic process and intervention. Several methods for sharing stories will be introduced including traditional writing/journaling, as well as photos, keepsakes, poetry, and art.

Advocating for Recreation Therapy: Coworkers, Families, Community Members (.15 CEU's)

Room: To be assigned

Speaker:

Sue Myllykangas, PhD, CTRS, Professor, Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

Session Description:

How many times have we all struggled to get others to understand fully what we do as recreation therapists? We know that what we do is valuable, but others can't seem to stretch out of the "recreation" part of our title to see the health and wellness benefits we offer. This session reflects on years of teaching Therapeutic Recreation to students and offers other ways to get that deeper understanding we crave so much. The methods presented in this session can be adapted to use during Organizational Workshops, Trainings, and Community/Family Support Groups.

Virtual Only Sessions

ACL Strategic Framework 2024: Practice Projections for Recreational Therapists Working with Older Adults (.1 CEU's)

Speaker:

Betsy Kemeny, PhD, CTRS, CPG, Professor, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, PA

Session Description:

Recreational therapy practice with older adults is constantly changing due to regulatory, financial, and population changes. What will the next 10 years hold for older adult recreational therapy practice? What should we all be working towards to empower recreational therapists and serve a more diverse aging population? The Administration for Community Living's Strategic Framework for Older Adults will be discussed as a backdrop to these changes. The work of ATRA's Older Adult Taskforce will be described.

Compassion Fatigue: The Cost of Caring for Others (.15 CEU's)

Speakers:

Kara Schweitzer, MS, CTRS, CDP, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension, Sterling, IL

Molly Hofer, MA, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension, Chicago, IL

Session Description:

As recreational therapists, we enjoy helping others, but sometimes prioritize the needs of others at our own expense. Despite attempting to separate work from personal life, we often tie our identity to our role as recreational therapists. This session will address compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious trauma, highlighting risk factors and symptoms of each. We'll discuss the barriers to acknowledgement of compassion fatigue and identify specific strategies to prevent compassion fatigue. You'll leave this session with a plan for resilience to maintain satisfaction in your work as a recreational therapist.

Access and Inclusion Guidance: The Courts and DOJ Say... (.1 CEUs)

Speaker:

John N. McGovern, JD, MS, W-T Group, LLC, Illinois

Session Description:

Is depression a disability? What makes a playground accessible? Where can you draw the line and deny a request for a reasonable modification? How is new construction defined? The answer to these and other questions are important for administrators and therapeutic recreation professionals across Illinois. Bring your questions to this session and hear what the Courts and Federal Enforcement agencies say regarding compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990/2008.