



RECREATION THERAPY SERVICE FACT SHEET

Recreation Therapy provides services to restore, remediate, and/or rehabilitate functional capabilities for Veterans with injuries, chronic illnesses, and disabling conditions. Recreation Therapy services embraces a philosophy of health promotion and disease prevention facilitated by qualified clinicians designed to support each Veteran's self-directed, self-determined, and fully independent participation in the chosen life pursuits. Recreation Therapy services include assessment and treatment for physical, cognitive, emotional, psychosocial, and leisure deficits. Services are provided based upon applying the best available research evidence, using expert clinical judgment in consideration with the Veteran's individual goals, preferences, and values.

RECREATION THERAPY

MISSION

Recreation therapy is a direct-care interdisciplinary service, with a mission of improving and enriching bio-psycho-social functioning through active therapy and/or meaningful therapeutic activities to maintain or improve functional independence and life quality. The intended outcome of these state of the art evidenced-based clinical interventions is independence in life activities based upon the needs and goals of each Veteran served.

RECREATION THERAPY VISION

To provide each Veteran served with the highest quality, comprehensive, evidence-based clinical interventions in a manner and in the least restrictive environment possible to facilitate their rehabilitation and achieve their fullest potential in all aspects of their life.

RECREATION THERAPY

PHILOSOPHY

The service embraces a philosophy of health promotion and disease prevention facilitated by qualified clinicians to enhance physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and leisure development that support each Veteran's self-directed, self-determined, and fully independent participation in their chosen life pursuits.

POPULATION SERVED

Recreation therapists practice across the continuum of care, providing services in inpatient settings, outpatient clinics, and tele-rehabilitation.

- Recreation Therapists serve as key members of numerous interdisciplinary treatment teams;
- Recreation Therapists construct appropriate and evidence-based recreation therapy interventions for treating patients with complex medical or mental health issues such as Polytrauma, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI);

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); Spinal Cord Injury (SCI); Substance Use Disorder/ Addictions; Serious Mental Illness (SMI); and Hospice/Palliative Care;

- Recreation Therapists design individualized treatment interventions to reduce stress, anxiety and maladaptive behaviors, recover basic motor functioning and reasoning abilities, build confidence, and develop compensatory strategies to master critical life skills necessary for community reengagement.



RECREATION THERAPY





FACTS

The VA is the largest employer of recreation therapists in the United States, employing over 850 recreation therapists.

In 2016, Recreation Therapy treated over 115,000 unique patients.



THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

Recreation therapists use their discipline specific evidenced based treatment modalities to address therapeutic or palliative care needs. Interventions are individualized to meet each Veteran served goals, preferences, and needs. Interventions are holistic and incorporate a Veteran’s function, interests, family, community, and lifestyle. Recreation therapists may co-treat or add their treatment modality to accomplish a particular therapeutic or palliative care goal.

Oftentimes, recreation therapists are more successful in treating individuals who resist other treatment approaches or who are unaware of conditions or issues inhibiting their rehabilitation.

RESEARCH

Multiple databases such as PubMed, PsychInfo, Medline, PsychArticles etc., include peer-reviewed articles, journals, publications, and books that discuss or support the use of recreation therapy towards improving quality and effectiveness of recreation therapy in the delivery of health care services.

CARE STANDARDS

Recreation therapists and creative arts therapists have defined Scopes of Practice or Care Standards that guide their clinical interventions. They follow the clinical care guidelines and regulations of the Joint Commission, the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and other regulatory agencies in order to ensure that each individual receives the care that is appropriate for their condition and situation.

NATIONAL EVENTS

The VA sponsors or participates in multiple national events that support, promote, and improve Veterans’ physical, social,

emotional, and creative talents. Veterans, employees, and volunteers who support these programs all share a strong sense of purpose, commitment, integrity, and comradery. These events include the Golden Age Games, various adaptive sports challenges, and the National Creative Arts Festival.

- www.va.gov/opa/speceven/gag/
- www.va.gov/adaptivesports/
- www.va.gov/opa/speceven/caf/

ORGANIZATIONS & RESOURCES

- American Art Therapy Association, Inc.*
www.arttherapy.org
- American Dance Therapy Association*
www.adta.org
- American Music Therapy Association*
www.musictherapy.org
- American Therapeutic Recreation Association*
www.atra-online.com
- National Association for Drama Therapy, Inc.*