

## Recreation Therapists pursuit of self-regulation in Nova Scotia

The Therapeutic Recreation Association of Atlantic Canada (TRAAC) defines therapeutic recreation using the following statement:

Leisure, recreation and play are essential to health and wellness. Focusing on people's strengths, therapeutic recreation engages people in a systematic process through which leisure is used as a primary tool in achieving health and wellness.

### Did you know

- TRAAC has been pursuing self-regulation since 2003
- Members voted 100% in favor of self-regulation at TRAAC's 2008 AGM
- Application for self-regulation was submitted in August 2010
- TRAAC's licensure sub-committee and legal counsel formally presented the request for self-regulation to the Legislative Review Committee in October 2011
- TRAAC has the more than a dozen letters of support for self-regulation from organizations including unions, other health professions, community based organizations, long term care facilities, Dalhousie University and CEO's of Health Authorities.
- There are 109 Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists (CTRS') working in the Province of Nova Scotia, providing recreation therapy services in collaboration with other health professionals, in a variety of institutions and organizations.
- Recreation Therapists are members of inter-professional teams and can be found working collaboratively with physicians, surgeons, nurses (RN's & LPN's), dieticians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech-language pathologists, chaplains and social workers to name a few. Recreation Therapists may be found in a variety of settings including hospitals, mental health centres, rehabilitation centres, addiction prevention and treatment programs, long-term care facilities, assisted living centres, specialized schools for students with disabilities, correctional facilities, outdoor recreation centres, licensed residential facilities, and other community-based health and human service agencies.
- Recreation Therapists are key team members that support and facilitate the discharge of patients from hospital settings into the community. Recreation Therapists play a key role in the development of care plans supporting individuals who have complex care needs that impact their ability to be discharged to the community. They also play a role in supporting individuals to live successfully in their communities.

Recreation Therapists are involved in collaborative practice across the province for example

- In Cape Breton a Recreation Therapist and social worker facilitate a group called Free 2BU that focuses on healthy living among youth, building their awareness of their strengths and areas for personal growth. The goal of the program is to increase youth resiliency.
- In acute care mental health, the interdisciplinary team (social workers, occupational therapists, nurses, psychiatrists, Recreation Therapists, hospitalists and a psychologist) has recognized the impact relationships have on mental well-being and recovery; therefore they facilitate a relationship / communication interpersonal psychotherapy group. The group incorporates time to talk about the challenges faced in relationships, provides support to one another, learning about communication strengths and barriers to problem solving. The major themes of the group are: conflict resolution, communication styles, support types and boundary setting.

Just as Nova Scotia was the first province in Canada to license Registered Nurses in 1910, Nova Scotia can be the leaders in Canada with respect to Recreation Therapists as well. For more information contact TRAAC's Advocacy Chair at [advocacy@traac.ca](mailto:advocacy@traac.ca).