

# **Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques**

**Evidence-Based Recreational Therapy**

***8th Edition***

*David R. Austin*

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To recreational therapy students, practitioners, and educators who have blessed my life. Special thanks and appreciation to the many recreational therapy colleagues and students at Indiana University who made my years in academia so enjoyable, pleasurable, gratifying, and rewarding.



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# Preface

This eighth edition of *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques: Evidence-Based Recreational Therapy* continues to focus on the practice of recreational therapy (RT). It is directed at the provision of RT. Although based largely on theory and empirical research, the book covers basic helping skills required in the practice of RT. I attempt to provide students and practitioners with practical applications that are grounded in sound theory and empirical evidence.

Who should read this eighth edition of *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques*?

1. Students who want to

- gain understandings and skills to become confident and competent recreational therapists;
- gain a theory-based, empirically-based, and client-based perspective for practice;
- be grounded in RT so they can clearly interpret the profession to others;
- develop into reflective, self-aware recreational therapists;
- have a book that is readable and easy to follow;
- have a book that can serve as a reference for completing an internship or for entering the profession as a full-time recreational therapist; and
- prepare themselves for the NCTRC examination.

2. Educators or leaders in the profession who need

- everyone “on the same page” about the purpose of RT; theory and evidence that support and directly influence the practice of RT; the RT process; clinical reasoning; the efficacy of facilitation techniques; the need and skills for therapeutic communication; the importance of being a culturally competent leader/therapist; gaining specific leadership skills, such as documentation; giving and receiving clinical supervision; understanding health and safety considerations, including a knowledge of medications; and the importance of self-awareness in being a therapist;
- to prioritize the basic knowledge and skills to help students learn efficiently to become effective recreational therapists who engage in theory- and evidence-based practice; and
- to prepare students for succeeding when taking the NCTRC examination.

3. Practitioners in RT who need

- a resource to understand the theory and evidence that support the practice of RT;
- a source to refer to in terms of performing everyday skills such as employing the RT process, preparing individualized intervention plans, preparing progress notes and other documentation, establishing therapeutic relationships, communicating therapeutically with clients, completing interviews with

- clients, finding evidence to support the use of facilitation techniques, interacting with clients from other cultures, motivating clients to participate in RT activities, giving and receiving clinical supervision, and knowing health and safety considerations such as the effects of medications; and
- a resource to guide them in developing further self-awareness as therapists.

## Neglected Areas Within the Recreational Therapy Literature

This text includes a number of topics often neglected or not given the attention they deserve in the RT literature. For instance, the book contains a chapter not typically found in RT books titled “Helping Others.” Chapter 5 discusses the helping relationship between the recreational therapist and the client and the need for recreational therapists to develop self-awareness before they can truly be effective in helping relationships. Students and professionals are challenged to complete self-examinations in regard to their sense of self, dealing with professional needs, and identifying personal values. For without self-knowledge, leader/therapists will not be effective. The chapter covers the important topic of ethical principles, providing explanations of each ethical principle. It approaches cultural competence from the perspective that recreational therapists, who are overwhelmingly White, have been found to lack understandings of those with backgrounds different from their own. Within the discussion of cultural competence, the chapter discusses the sometimes neglected and misunderstood topic of sexual orientation. Burnout is an occupational hazard that recreational therapists need to know about. Chapter 5 also gives information on how to prevent and how to cope with burnout for helping professional to perform competently.

Leadership is vital in RT. Nonetheless, the RT literature on leadership is not as abundant as might be hoped. Chapter 7 covers myriad group leadership concerns. For instance, it gives attention to a number of challenges that the recreational therapist will inevitably face including anxiety as a new leader/therapist; integrating new members into a group; using modeling; the therapeutic use of self-disclosure; how to influence group members who only look toward the leader for direction; dealing with group members who monopolize; getting nonparticipants to join in group activities; and dealing with conflict with clients, “difficult” group members, and physical aggression within a group.

A basic tenet in RT leadership is that the emphasis is always on the client and not on the activity, because what happens to the client as a result of participation is critical. Yet the RT literature have given little attention to group processing and helping clients to gain the most from their group participation. Within its pages, *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques* covers concepts behind processing, as well as specific procedures to use in conducting group processing, including debriefing.

The RT literature has also relatively ignored research and theory drawn from social psychology that directly pertains to leadership practices. Chapter 8 covers many important areas of social psychology. These include self-concept, self-esteem, self-handicapping, learned helplessness, the self-fulfilling prophecy, labeling, loneliness, social support, social facilitation, social learning theory, self-efficacy, and attributional processes.

Chapter 6 on communication skills is critical for the RT literature because the literature on improving students’ competencies in therapeutic communication and interpersonal skills is extremely limited. The chapter concludes with a large number of communications exercises that allow students to put learnings into practice.

In Chapter 9, I wrote that it is alarming that many recreational therapists have not received specific training on giving or receiving clinical supervision. I have added information on strength-based clinical supervision to the chapter. Hopefully, the chapter will be used by students and professors in the study of clinical supervision, as well as practitioners, particularly those who will be providing clinical supervision to student interns.

Additionally, it seems those actively working in RT often do not receive the knowledge of health and safety concerns required for practice. Chapter 10 provides information on vital topics such as drugs and their side effects and how to transfer clients. A PhD-prepared nurse and a physician trained in psychiatry and neurology authored this unique contribution to the literature.

Finally, texts on RT sometimes exclude our colleagues from the North. Where applicable, information on both Canada and the USA is included in this edition. Having said this, I know I could have been more inclusive and will welcome comments from Canadian recreational therapists to improve future editions of the book.

## So What's New?

When a new edition of a book appears, professors often want to know what is new about this edition. The philosophy of practice has been consistent since the first edition in 1982 and the organization of chapters and their topics has remained largely unchanged. Like prior editions, this new edition attempts to offer a theory-based, evidence-based, client-centered approach to practice.

However, much about the eighth edition is new. To begin, as I wrote this edition, I attempted to emphasize those aspects of practice that currently are judged to be most important. I had the privilege of being able to take advantage of findings from the 2017 NCTRC *Job Analysis Report* to highlight aspects of practice rated as being critical in RT.

A number of new research findings directly relate to RT practice. The amount of new research available for this edition is impressive. Where empirical evidence from research is not available, other sources to support evidence-based practice appear. The number of new citations within the eighth edition totals to be nearly 500.

Perhaps the availability of new resources is most evident in Chapter 3 on facilitation techniques, where I have cited more than 300 new references relevant to evidence-based practice. With this information, I expanded the discussion of many facilitation techniques. For instance, the chapter includes extensive coverage on helping clients to deal with stress. It also expands on the use of physical activity as a facilitation technique. The chapter presents much new information on the therapeutic benefits of physical activity for clients, particularly those with chronic conditions including dementia, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, strokes, cancer, and diabetes. The chapter also provides new recommendations for physical activity for older adults in long-term care facilities, recommendations for physical activity and weight, and recommendations for motivating the client to participate in physical activity.

Those familiar with the prior editions will recognize the new information that appears not only in the extensive facilitation techniques chapter, but also throughout the book. I believe it is the most extensive and up-to-date treatment available on the topic of RT practice.



# Notes to Recreational Therapy Faculty

## The Book Lends Itself to Use in More Than One Course

Professors from several universities have related to me that they use chapters from *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques* in several classes. For example, they have used the facilitation techniques chapter in facilitation techniques courses. The communication skills chapter has been used in courses or units of courses on therapeutic communications. The chapter on clinical supervision has been used in courses or units on clinical supervision, and the chapter on the RT process has been used as a resource for courses in program development.

## Student Reactions to the Book

More than one student has told me that they particularly liked past editions of *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques*. They reported that it was the RT book that they most enjoyed reading, noting the content was very readable, clearly presented, and easy to follow. I have made every attempt to retain those elements that make the book user friendly.

## Instructors' Materials

Several chapters include appendices of exercises for students to complete. Instructors often appreciate the exercises because they can use them in class or as homework assignments. They also have commented that the reading comprehension questions at the conclusion of each chapter are helpful to students and can also be used as examination questions.

Instructors' materials for this eighth edition are available from Sagamore-Venture for those who adopt the book. These include an expansive test bank of multiple-choice items and possible learning activities for use in class or as a homework assignment. Author-prepared PowerPoint slides to accompany the learning activities are available, as well as PowerPoint slides of all tables and figures in the book.

As someone who instructed university courses in RT for nearly 40 years, I appreciated having instructors' materials made available for use with textbooks and hope instructors using the materials that accompany *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques* will find them to be useful.

## Finally . . .

This book is available due to the combined efforts of a number of people at Sagamore-Venture. These individuals include Joe Bannon and Peter Bannon, who own and operate Sagamore-Venture and who continue to support RT in many ways, including publishing any number of textbooks for the profession. Extremely helpful has been the support provided by Susan Davis, Director of Development and Production, and the supreme efforts of Amy Dagit, Production Coordinator, and Marissa Willison, Graphic Designer.

David R. Austin, PhD, FDRT, FALS

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# About the Author

## David R. Austin, PhD, FDRT, FALS

Dr. Austin's research has focused upon the social psychology of recreational therapy and professional preparation. Topics of his over 155 publications have included attitudes toward serving persons with disabilities, burnout, and recreational therapy curricula. He is the author or coauthor of seven widely used textbooks: *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques* (8<sup>th</sup> edition); *Perspectives on Recreational Therapy*; *Management Functions in Recreational Therapy*; *Inclusive and Special Recreation: Opportunities for Diverse Populations to Flourish* (6<sup>th</sup> edition); *Recreational Therapy: An Introduction* (4<sup>th</sup> edition); *Conceptual Foundations for Therapeutic Recreation*; and *Lessons Learned: An Open Letter to Recreational Therapy Students and Practitioners*. Dr. Austin produced 23 instructional videos through the federally funded Recreation Therapy Video (RTV) Project, and he is author of the Health Protection/Health Promotion Model of practice. Dr. Austin has served on editorial boards for the *Journal of Leisure Research*, *Schole*, *Annual in Therapeutic Recreation*, and *Leisure Today*. He is a past president of ATRA, the Society of Park and Recreation Educators, and the Academy of Leisure Sciences, as well as a past member of the NRPA Board of Trustees. Dr. Austin is a fellow in the Academy of Leisure Sciences and a founding fellow of the National Academy of Recreational Therapists. He is the only individual to have received the NTRS Distinguished Service Award, the ATRA Distinguished Fellow Award, and the SPRE Distinguished Fellow Award. He has been named to the Union College Hall of Fame and was presented the Brightbill Award by the University of Illinois. In 1998, Dr. Austin received the NRPA Literary Award. He has been awarded Indiana University's highest teaching award, the Frederic Bachman Lieber Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching.



# Basic Concepts

## Chapter Purpose

To become a competent helping professional, recreational therapists must gain both the theoretical and the technical knowledge necessary for successful practice. This chapter presents an introduction to helping others and to the content and format of the book.

## Key Terms

- Helping relationships
- Theory
- Objectives

## Objectives

- Explain the nature of the content contained within this book.
- Discuss what makes the recreational therapist different from the layperson.
- Describe the major topics to be covered in this book.
- Outline the format followed in each chapter.
- Recognize that the approach taken within this book is to make the reader focus on instruction.

This book marks a departure from the survey type of textbooks that have served the profession well as literature for introductory courses in recreational therapy. The book will examine the actual methods of recreational therapy. It is directed at the *how* of recreational therapy. Although it is based largely on theory and empirical research, the book covers basic helping skills required in the practice of recreational therapy. I have attempted to provide you with practical applications that are grounded in sound theory and empirical evidence. In short, *Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques* attempts to offer you a theory-based, evidence-based, client-centered approach to practice.

## On Helping Others

Those in recreational therapy require literature that will expand knowledge of the processes and techniques central to the delivery of evidence-based direct client services. In successful **helping relationships**, we assist the client to meet a problem or need. If we are to be able to do this better than the client can alone or with family or friends, we must possess more than good intentions. The difference between a layperson's approach to the client and that of the trained practitioner is that the practitioner bases his or her service on processes and techniques drawn from the theoretical, scientific, and experiential knowledge of his or her profession. People rely on recreational therapists to have the theory and

skills that will enable them to do things they could not otherwise accomplish alone. This book provides knowledge of the theory and skills required to perform as a recreational therapist.

## Major Topics Covered

### Chapter 1: Basic Concepts

Chapter 1 offers a brief overview and discussion of this book's major concepts, purposes, and organization.

### Chapter 2: Theories and Therapies

One distinction between the layperson and the professional is that the professional draws on **theory** as a basis for action. Chapter 2 differentiates among psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic psychology, positive psychology, and other theories—and therapeutic approaches related to these orientations—and provides a fundamental level of knowledge about theoretical perspectives for recreational therapists.

### Chapter 3: Facilitation Techniques

Chapter 3 discusses facilitation techniques such as values clarification, social skills training, physical activities, progressive relaxation training, yoga, animal-assisted therapy, and reminiscence therapy that are less comprehensive in their development than the major theories and therapies presented in Chapter 2. Research support provided for each of the facilitation techniques offers recreational therapists empirical evidence on which evidence-based practice may rest.

### Chapter 4: The Recreational Therapy Process

The recreational therapy process (sometimes referred to as the APIE process) is a systematic method of problem solving applied in recreational therapy. Chapter 4 shows how, through a progression of steps involving assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation, the process is utilized to help bring about changes in the client and the client's environment. Closely related to the recreational therapy process is theory that is expressed in conceptual models for recreational therapy practice. The chapter contains an explanation of how conceptual models inform recreational therapy practice. It also includes information on evidence-based practice.

### Chapter 5: Helping Others

Recreational therapy takes place through interpersonal relations. Helping people is a complex act requiring an understanding of both human behavior and what constitutes an effective helper and a helping relationship. Chapter 5 explains how this understanding is an essential ingredient for the recreational therapist to bring about the therapeutic use of self. The development of self-awareness is vital to recreational therapists, because knowing one's self is a basic competency necessary for helping others.

## **Chapter 6: Communication Skills**

All interpersonal relationships depend on communication. Without communication, no relationship can exist, because relationships depend on a two-way sharing of ideas and experiences. This is unquestionably true in recreational therapy; good interpersonal communication is necessary for effectively relating to clients in clinical practice.

## **Chapter 7: Being a Leader: Group Leadership Skills**

One of the most critical elements in recreational therapy is leadership. Chapter 7 looks at the interactions that occur between the leader and the client, and among clients, that are central to the success of recreational therapy programs. Skills in leadership help the recreational therapist use therapeutic interventions for treatment and rehabilitation and to facilitate client growth. Leadership in recreational therapy calls for competencies in dealing with both individuals and groups.

## **Chapter 8: Specific Leadership Tasks and Concerns**

Leadership in recreational therapy requires knowledge of a number of specific tasks and concerns. Among these tasks and concerns are (1) individual client documentation, (2) incident reports, (3) teaching–learning principles, (4) motivating clients, (5) teamwork, (6) advocacy, (7) the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF), and (8) understanding transactions with clients. Areas covered within the section on understanding transactions are self-concept, self-handicapping, learned helplessness, the self-fulfilling prophecy, labeling, loneliness, social support, social facilitation, social learning theory, self-efficacy, and attributional processes.

## **Chapter 9: Clinical Supervision**

Chapter 9 discusses clinical supervision, a cooperative process between a supervisor and an individual who has direct responsibility for carrying out the agency's clinical program through work with clients. The clinical supervisor helps the supervisee to improve his or her clinical abilities and to achieve the goals sought for the clinical program.

## **Chapter 10: Health and Safety Considerations**

Theory forms the underpinnings for professional practice; however, recreational therapists also must possess certain technical knowledge and skills. Among the areas of technical knowledge that may be required in recreational therapy are the use of first-aid and safety procedures with members of specific client groups, the proper use of mechanical aids, procedures for transfers and assistive techniques, and information on the effects of commonly used psychotropic and anticonvulsant drugs.

## **This Book's Format**

Each chapter begins with a brief statement of purpose and key terms, followed by a listing of the major objectives for the chapter. At the conclusion of each chapter, reading comprehension questions are provided to guide your reading. They also serve the instructor and students as questions for class discussion and perhaps as exam questions. Within each chapter, you will find questions or statements heading each section. These questions

or statements are often designed to further break down the objectives for the chapter into smaller, more digestible parts.

## The Focus of Instruction

You, the reader, are the central point of focus for this book. The focus is on you and the *objectives* you must achieve to possess competencies necessary to meet the personal and professional demands that you will face as a recreational therapist. Your mastery of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge required for professional service in recreational therapy is critical to your personal success and that of your profession.

## The Objectives

The **objectives** at the beginning of each chapter form a road map for learning. They make the purpose of the chapter clear, thus enhancing learning and removing the mystique that sometimes accompanies and plagues instruction.

### Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Why does a recreational therapist need more than “good intentions” to practice successfully?
2. What makes the recreational therapist, or any professional helper, different from the layperson?
3. Outline the parts or items found in each chapter.
4. Where is the focus of the book directed?