



Therapeutic Recreation Practice: A Strengths Approach

by Lynn Anderson and Linda Heyne



From the Introduction:

This book is based on the premise that the role of therapeutic recreation is to help people identify goals and aspirations (what they see as possibilities, what they want to have happen), and their accompanying talents, assets, interests, and capacities. We also see therapeutic recreation as identifying family, neighborhood, and community resources to support people in achieving their goals. Using a strengths approach, therapeutic recreation specialists help people link their aspirations to resources and supports, and help them establish plans to reach their dreams. This approach is grounded in the idea that “goals related to problems” are not necessarily “goals related to solutions” in people’s lives. Solutions are what people want to have happen, versus problems, which are what people don’t want to have happen. Our hope is that the book will provide a healthy corrective to the entrenchment of our profession, and our society as a whole, in the ubiquitous problem-oriented approach we use almost without thinking.

Overview of the Book

Therapeutic Recreation Practice: A Strengths Approach is divided into three main sections. In Part One, we provide you with a foundation of the strengths approach. *Chapter One: Introduction* provides the framework and strategies for learning used throughout the book. *Chapter Two: Paradigm Shifts* sets the stage for the sweeping changes occurring in recreation, health, education, and human service systems. Social indicators and scientific support for the shift to a strengths-based approach are also presented. *Chapter Three: A Sea Change in Therapeutic Recreation* explores how the shift to a strengths-based ecological approach fits into therapeutic recreation practice, and how therapeutic recreation can flourish as a profession in the paradigm. *Chapter Four: The Leisure and Well-Being Model: An Ecological Approach* introduces you to a model of therapeutic recreation practice that is based on the strengths perspective. *Chapter Five: Strengths* provides you with a structure and vocabulary to look closely at and understand strengths relevant to the practice of therapeutic recreation. *Chapter Six: Theories* provides an introduction to theories that guide a strengths perspective and are relevant to therapeutic recreation. Finally, *Chapter Seven: Principles* overviews some fundamental guidelines for a strengths-based approach, which emanate from theory and philosophy.

Part Two is the mainstay of this book. This section looks at the application of the strengths perspective to the therapeutic recreation process: assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. In *Chapter Eight: Collaborative Practice*, we help you understand the importance of collaboration in the therapeutic recreation process, the role of the participant and family in collaboration, and the roles of other professionals with whom you will work in the helping relationship. *Chapter Nine: Assessment* provides you with a way to think about and conduct assessment from a strengths perspective to ensure authentic and meaningful practice. *Chapter Ten: Planning* examines the link between assessment and planning, and the principles and practice of planning. *Chapter Eleven: Implementation* provides an overview of common and new interventions in therapeutic recreation, applied from a strengths perspective. *Chapter Twelve: Transition and Inclusion* provides a strengths approach to helping participants terminate your services, and continue to pursue meaningful, fully engaged lives in their communities. Finally, *Chapter Thirteen: Evaluation* describes the processes you will use in therapeutic recreation to document and evaluate the services you provide.

Part Three of the book helps you as a professional establish and maintain yourself as a strength-based therapeutic recreation specialist. *Chapter Fourteen: Advocacy* provides a framework and guidelines for advocating for the strengths perspective, and for the participants with whom you work. *Chapter Fifteen: Building Your Strengths as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist* stresses the importance of being well prepared in therapeutic recreation, from credentialing to clinical supervision to continuing education. And last, *Chapter Sixteen: Looking Ahead* helps you put what you learn in this book into the context of your life as a professional in therapeutic recreation.

