

Therapeutic Recreation—The Benefits Are Endless . . .™ Training Program and Resource Guide. Jane Broida (2000). Ashburn, VA: National Therapeutic Recreation Society. (www.activeparks.org)

Therapeutic Recreation—The Benefits Are Endless . . .™ Training Program and Resource Guide is benefits-based tool that applies the benefits message to guide promotion of therapeutic recreation (TR). The benefits movement was launched in 1991 through NPRA advocating benefits of recreation with educational training, videos, books, and promotional products. A premiere attempt to specify benefits as outcomes of TR was published in 1991 titled *A Consensus View—Benefits of Therapeutic Recreation* (Coyle, Kinney, Riley, & Shank, 1991). It outlined desired outcomes according to the population served and set a framework for the need for efficacy research. This new NTRS training manual was designed to enable the therapeutic recreation specialist (TRS) to consistently promote TR practice in terms of benefits and outcomes produced, to develop and justify programs based upon documented benefits as outcomes, and to manage programs in a manner that highlights efficacy in presenting the profession to varied audiences. This user-friendly manual is like a magic wand that connects therapists, students, and educators to a marketing specialist who articulates the language of benefits to show how recreation heals.

The manual is comprised of 281 pages in a three-inch, three-ring binder divided into eight tabbed sections. Section One begins with a solid overview of the benefits movement and enumerates benefits specific to TR (physical, social, psychological/emotional, cognitive, expressive, benefits to recreation and leisure development, to the profession/staff, and to caregiver/parent/family) that are supported by professional literature. It is directed specifically to professionals and their need to convey the role and importance of TR services. This section is useful for understanding the benefits movement and gives explanations on how to spread the benefits message. The manual helps therapists customize the benefits message to peers, colleagues, and the general public as targeted audiences.

Section Two contains 64 TR success stories, cross-referenced on a spreadsheet index across 12 benefits categories. Each story is a brief paragraph; a user can quickly identify specific

benefits before reading each story by using the benefits key. This key designates a number at the beginning of the story for each expressed category of benefit. For example, story number 11 relates the experience of an adult male with cerebral palsy who progressed from fear of the water, to enjoying the water with flotation devices, to asking for community referrals. This story correlates with benefit six (development of recreation and leisure skills). These stories could be read to participants as a type of bibliotherapy exercise. Success stories can be a powerful influence in defining benefits of TR when sharing them with the public.

Section Three consists of a literature review that provides a key, a spreadsheet, and citations along with an abstract of specific articles featuring benefits including physical, social, psychological, cognitive, and expressive domains. The user can search at a glance for specific literature by benefit, population, age, modality, and/or diagnostic group. It is important for the TRS to be able to reference these benefits in specific journals and periodicals because it is critical to be able to communicate the outcomes of services provided. Well-documented research may be the most powerful tool that the profession has when conveying the significance of the profession. This section could be used to design benefits-based materials such as flyers and program protocols, or information for therapeutic recreation participants and families as care partners.

Section Four is comprised of resource listings for multimedia materials that relay the benefits message across populations and settings including audiocassettes, videos, and publications available for purchase. For example, the video "With Access for All" profiles the importance of community-based exercise programs. All products are listed alphabetically, along with ordering information.

Section Five, labeled "Transparency Masters," is a set of preformatted pages for sharing the benefits message with audiences by describing the role of TR within the scope of healthcare. Users who prefer the simplicity of overheads versus featured PowerPoint presentations may want to enhance the text with graphics or color. This section also includes inspirational quotes regarding leisure and play that could be integrated into promotional materials illustrating the benefits of recreation, or into the beginning and end of presentations. A simple, short quote may express what a TRS wants to say more effectively than a long explanation.

Section Six is a set of three Power Point presentations in diskette format stored in a plastic holder at the back of the manual. An alternative storage unit may be necessary to ensure that these disks do not fall out and become lost. These presentations utilize easy-to-understand language designed for presentation to therapists, healthcare providers, and community audiences. The PowerPoint presentations are informative, and portray different aspects of TR and the benefits message depending on the audience. The graphics used to reinforce these presentations could be modified. Screen bean figures predominate along with images of a Caucasian male winning a race to represent physical benefits, and three businessmen shaking hands representing social benefits. More representative clip art or images could be utilized to portray therapeutic recreation and to promote diversity. The PowerPoint presentations can be customized by anyone who purchases the training manual to reflect the ages, culture, and identity of audiences. Considering future revisions of the manual, audiences who may have been overlooked are families and participants themselves. Another customized presentation might show new participants and families the benefits of services and inspire them in their personal road to health and well-being. A section should be added detailing different ways to make presentations accessible to all individuals, including tips for room setup, visual aids, sound amplification, captioning, and video description. The TRS may need guidelines for converting marketing materials to alternative formats such as cassette, Braille, computer disks, and large print as an aspect of walking the talk of inclusion.

Section Seven references organizations and periodicals pertaining to a number of issues important to, or related to TR, such as trade associations representing disability groups. It is organized with a table of contents, a description of each journal or periodical, and contact information. The contents are divided into 18 content areas such as aging, case management, occupational therapy, and special education, with the corresponding page number referenced. These can be extremely useful resources when a TRS is searching for desired benefits and outcomes related specifically to an individual's need for advocacy, information, or adapted equipment.

Section Eight is labeled "Benefits Activities and Reporting Forms," which has 15 different activities to help the TRS facilitate understanding of leisure benefits. For example, the worksheet handout "How Does Your Garden Grow?" helps audiences enumerate and categorize benefits of leisure according to personal experience. Another form invites readers to advance the benefits message by sending in personal stories that could reinforce outcomes in refreshing displays for future editions of the training manual.

Overall, this training manual, available at a cost of \$60.00 for members and \$78.00 for non-members (which can be purchased with or without the accompanying video), can be a very useful tool for professionals dedicated to sharing the benefits of TR, but who need source material to articulate and present a consensus display. There is a lot of room for creativity to customize information for a variety of purposes and audiences. A section could be added outlining how a TR department could incorporate the benefits message into their own material. In addition, NTRS may want to incorporate their merchandise list of existing benefits-based promotional products.

This manual is a commendable beginning effort as a training tool. It is a practical guide to show the possibility for conveying and promoting the abstraction called therapeutic recreation that carries so many meanings.

Reference

Coyle, C., Kinney, W., Riley, B., & Shank, J. (1991). *Benefits of therapeutic recreation: A consensus view*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.

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Therapeutic Recreation—The Benefits are Endless . . .™ Video. National Therapeutic Recreation Society (2000). Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association. (www.activeparks.org)

Therapeutic Recreation—The Benefits are Endless . . .™ Video was made with the intention of providing a comprehensive overview of the benefits of therapeutic recreation. This video is only 11:32 minutes long, although it is packed with information. It does a good job of articulating what a CTRS does, showing benefits as outcomes. It explicitly articulates the benefits of physical, mental and emotional well-being by showing people who have a variety of disabilities from different age groups participating in adapted and routine leisure pursuits: mouth painting, hand cycling, a group of participants at a wave park, a group of long term care residents sketching, and adapted water-skiing.

The video begins with Carol Huserik, CTRS, briefly discussing what therapeutic recreation is and settings where the CTRS works. Carol explains that a CTRS meets with a client, sets up a plan and then facilitates the involvement of community reintegration. Carol makes the following profound statement, "Recreation is life. We all look forward to recreation, we all may