

Case Histories in Therapeutic Recreation

Over the past decade, increased attention has been paid to documenting the efficacy of therapeutic recreation services that are provided for clients. While empirical research has been the main approach called for in answering questions regarding service efficacy, a growing number of scholars have pointed to the need for drawing on other ways of knowing (Bullock, 1993; Ellis, 1989; Mobily, 1989). Other, more established professions have an extensive history of valuing such use of multiple ways of knowing in evaluating and learning about the services that they provide. In particular, the case history method has long been used in both psychology and medicine.

In therapeutic recreation, case histories have been called for by therapeutic recreation professionals and scholars (Carter, Van Andel, & Robb, 1985; Robertson, 1989) and they have been used to exemplify the TR process (Heitkamp, 1995; Wilhite & Keller, 1992). Case histories allow professionals to examine issues regarding the effective use of the TR process with individual clients within the context of service delivery. Case histories also allow us to answer a variety of questions, such as: "How does the information from particular assessment tools fuel the development of an individual treatment plan?" "How does a client respond to therapeutic recreation interventions that are processed in the group as part of the implementation phase?" "How do the interactions and collaboration with other team members assist with the implementation of the treatment plan?"

Case histories that imply answers to such questions not only affirm the value of practice and therapeutic recreation technique, but they also spawn a myriad of additional benefits as well. They have the potential to spark new approaches to clinical practice, they may help determine the scope of ethical behavior, they may influence the development of research questions, they may serve as learning tools in the educational arena, and, in some instances, case histories may serve to document the efficacy of therapeutic recreation services for specific clients.

In 1990, recognizing these valuable outcomes, Drs. Ellis and Robertson proposed that case

histories become a separate section of the *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*. That proposal was received positively by the Journal's Editorial Board (including co-editors Drs. MacNeil and Mobily and the associate editors) and the first cases were published in 1991. Since that time, 13 case histories have been published in the Case Histories Section of *TRJ* and significant support for that section has emerged from the *TRJ* editorial board as well as from therapeutic recreation professionals throughout the world.

Recognizing that the time had perhaps arrived for a critical review and evaluation of the case histories section of the Journal, Drs. Robertson and Voelkl approached the *TRJ* editorial board about devoting a special issue to that topic. This special issue is a result of that request.

For the special issue, we asked select practitioners and educators to submit manuscripts to address key issues and implications that emerge from case histories in therapeutic recreation. In order to allay "publication anxiety" of professionals who have never contributed a paper but are potential contributors of valuable case histories, we asked Sandy Negley and Missy Armstrong to discuss the process of preparing a case history for publication. Practice issues, drawing from previously published case histories, are discussed by Glen Van Andel, Lynn Bovee Holmes and Richard MacNeil. Mark Widmer addresses the ethical implications that may emerge from published case histories. The implications for education via pre-service and in-service programs are discussed by Jean Keller and Barbara Wilhite. John Shank and John McGovern discuss the political and legal implications of case histories and Catherine Coyle and Charles Bullock reflect on the implications for research that emerge from case histories. These articles challenge us to consider the broad range of contributions that published case histories have for the development of the therapeutic recreation profession. They will also generate thought, word, and deed by those seeking to enhance the quality of their professional endeavors.

Along with the invited manuscripts pertaining to the issues and implications of published case histories, you will find seven new case histories. Each of these cases highlights the professional knowledge and skills needed by therapeutic recreation specialists, regardless of the setting in which they work. The case by Sheldon and Mendenhall illustrates the high level skills of therapeutic recreation specialists that are needed in community based programs. The case by Lane, Montgomery, and Schmid exemplifies the strategies that allow therapeutic recreation services to be tailored in response to the individual differences of our clients. The case by Krueger and Kanary describes how the therapist's interactions and actions were key in the ability of the interdisciplinary team to provide services to a young woman with Prader Willi Syndrome. The case by Malley presents two years of intervention and follow-up by a therapeutic recreation professional working with an individual with a dual-diagnosis. Ashton-Shaeffer, Shelton, and Johnson describe and compare the effectiveness of home and community based leisure education interventions with two different individuals. The Baker-Roth, McLaughlin, Weitzenkamp, and Womeldorff case presents the role of a Therapeutic Recreation Community Liaison in supporting the independent leisure functioning of a client. Also unique is the May, Hawkins, Eklund, Kim, Rogers, and Sung case, which compares actual service provision to service provision suggested by current literature.

We challenge you to read the cases and accompanying papers critically, discuss them with colleagues, and, when appropriate, write to authors directly to share your thoughts, common experiences, and other reactions. The benefits from this special issue will result from the interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of cases in terms of our current practices, techniques, ethical behavior, and research.

This special issue would not have been possible without the support and assistance from a number of individuals. We would like to express our appreciation to the editors, Drs. MacNeil and Mobily, and associate editors for their support and advice. We would also like to thank the individuals who reviewed cases and provided constructive comments: Eileen Andreassi, Scott Anthony, Nancy Beaudouin, Kim Cassell, John Chambers, Jean Eiswert, Gary Ellis, Jeff Ferguson, Jean Folkerth, Barb Hawkins, Carol Hermann, James Johnson, Jean Keller, Amanda Lambert, Elizabeth Liles, Kris Lliteras, Mary Mathieu, Tim McConnell, Donnalda McMillin, DaRae Milburn, Cathy Morris, Sandy Negley, Mary Beth Norton, Kathy Supiano, Gary Thompson, Robert Turner, Glen Van Andel, Mary Victor, Mark Widmer, and Sara Wright. Thanks and appreciation are also extended to those individuals who developed manuscripts that addressed the issues and implications of published case histories. Finally, we would like to thank those individuals who submitted cases, published or not, for their interest, support, and leadership and commitment to our profession and to the clients we serve.

Judith E. Voelkl and Terrance P. Robertson
Guest Editors

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