

BOOK REVIEW

Therapeutic Recreation Processes and Techniques*Evidence-Based Recreational Therapy, 7th ed.*

by David R. Austin
Sagamore Publishing (2013)

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David Austin is an author who has been contributing to the field for many years. This new, 7th edition of his foundational textbook nicely continues that tradition. The textbook integrates knowledge from a variety of disciplines and the latest information from the TR field to thoroughly explain recreational therapy as a client-centered, evidenced-based member of allied health care.

There are 10 chapters and all but one begins with a purpose and ends with Reading Comprehension Questions. For each chapter, in between these “bookend” sections are key terms, chapter objectives, content tied to the chapter topic, and then a chapter summary. Some chapters also have an Appendix at the end, and these often provide activities for experiential learning. The first chapter is an overview of the entire book and raises the worthwhile question, “How is the recreational therapist different from the layperson?” The remainder of the text details the answer for the reader.

In the second chapter, the intent is to cover various psychological and cognitive theories. There are many theories reviewed, and a reader, especially a beginning therapeutic recreation student, may want to work through this chapter at a slower pace in order to integrate the information in more depth.

Chapter 3 is a facilitation techniques overview. Dr. Austin describes over 25 techniques, many with the research support identified, thus providing a firm start to evidence-based understanding for many of our interventions. Austin presents a fairly comprehensive range of leisure education interventions. Many of these interventions are familiar and found in various leisure education textbooks, but a few are not written about as much and, therefore, contribute to the list of modalities, for example, bibliotherapy, cinematherapy and retail therapy.

Chapter 4 is full of good ideas as this segment of the book provides one of the best explanations of the therapeutic recreation process. The definition of, and need for evidence-based practice is discussed in this section. Also in Chapter 4 are unique con-

tributions about documentation and a sample “intervention plan” is provided. The TR Models of Service are reviewed, and Austin’s own Health Protection /Health Promotion Model is detailed. Through the book and in this chapter we see the thinking of the author and he provides many insights and tips coming from his years of teaching and working in the field. In this chapter he shares this belief about the field of recreation therapy stating,

The simple provision of recreation service for individuals who are ill or have disabilities does not constitute in itself the delivery of RT services. Recreation programs for persons who are ill or disabled that do not utilize the recreation therapy process should make no claims on the term “recreational therapy.” They are better called special or inclusive recreation programs (Austin, 2013, p. 220).

Chapter 5 is titled “Helping Others” and presents the foundational ideas about the characteristics needed to be a good professional. Topics such as self-awareness, ethics, and burnout are explained in a reasonable amount of detail, providing a great beginning for the consideration of these concepts by entry-level professionals.

The next chapter (6) deals with communication issues and the author gives practical information for listening skills, verbal techniques, nonverbal information and communication patterns and issues found in typical client groups. The skills of interviewing with tips for a productive interview are also presented.

“Being a Leader” is Chapter 7. This section provides information about leadership at the beginning of the chapter. The middle section especially provides useful information to future practitioners as it covers very practical situations and how to manage them in the leadership role. For example, how does a leader encourage a nonparticipating group member? What does the leader do if a group member engages in conflict? What is involved in the experience of co-leading activities and interventions? The remaining pages of this chapter provide group management information such as group processing and debriefing processes. Leadership subtopics continue in the next chapter, with a focus on the tasks found in the provision of Therapeutic Recreation Services. Charting, being a member of a team providing services for a client, and understanding coding systems such as the ICF are some of the topics in Chapter 8.

Austin’s presentation of the topic of clinical supervision is a huge contribution to the field and this is well discussed in Chapter 9. This knowledge is important to our field and not found as an identified subject matter in many introductory therapeutic recreation textbooks; so its inclusion is an important one. Health and safety issues are the focus of Chapter 10 and this section provides a solid overview of basic concerns regarding medicines and medical aids and devices as they are utilized in the therapeutic recreation field.

This textbook is literally jam-packed with information. The book provides to the reader more than can be processed on an initial read. Yet, this wealth of knowledge stems from the author’s deep understanding of the theoretical, practical, and significant aspects of our field. The language is very user friendly and topics are presented in both a succinct, yet detailed manner that makes this book a continued classic textbook and reference for our field. A recreational therapist, student or practitioner, can benefit from engaging with the book and all of its information, concepts and skills, thereby

also clearly answering the question: “How is a recreational therapist different from a layperson?” Thanks go out to Dr. Austin, who shares from his years of experience and his wisdom about the great field of recreational therapy for the benefit of future professionals and those currently practicing.