



2025

NLTRA Conference

Conference at a Glance



Thursday, October 2nd
Friday, October 3rd



NLTRA

Newfoundland & Labrador
Therapeutic Recreation Association

Bridging Research and Practice: Elevating Standards in Therapeutic Recreation

As the field continues to evolve, it's essential that new evidence-based practices, research findings, and innovative methodologies are effectively integrated into everyday practice. This theme encourages professionals to reflect on how research informs the APIE process of TR programs and services. By doing so, TR practitioners can elevate the standards of care, improve outcomes, and ensure that services are aligned with the latest advancements in the field.

KEY NOTE

Brad Glynn is the Executive Director of Lifewise (formerly CHANNAL), a provincial mental health and addictions charity that is staffed by people with lived experience. Through his position at Lifewise, Brad serves on numerous Boards, committees, and working groups including End Homelessness St. John's and the Network of Disability Organizations. He supports the amazing team at Lifewise in reducing stigma and providing hope for people with lived experience through peer support services, public education activities, and policy consultation.

Before Lifewise, Brad worked as an Educator for over a decade. During this time, he advocated passionately for increasing mental health and social-emotional learning in classrooms from Kindergarten to Grade 12. He worked extensively with teachers in multiple provinces, providing professional development and keynote sessions on the value of teaching children about reflection, empathy, and boundaries, in the development of strong mental wellness.

Brad will share his personal journey and how recreation and leisure were a vital component in his long-term recovery and wellness journey.



Brad Glynn



MOVING TOWARD CONNECTION: RECREATION THERAPY INNOVATIONS IN ACUTE CARE FOR THE ELDERLY AT ST. CLARE'S MERCY HOSPITAL

In this presentation, we will present the critical impact of loneliness on Older Adults. We will discuss the pilot of Recreation Therapy at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital. Finally, we will provide an overview of the newly established Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) unit at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital, detailing the role of Recreation Therapy within the unit and showcasing specific interventions aimed at improving patient outcomes.

PRESENTED BY:

Tara Butter, CTRS
Mackenzie Reid, CTRS &
Becca Clarke, CTRS



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WIND IN YOUR HAIR: A TRISHAW EXPERIENCE

Royal Ottawa Place is a long-term care home geared toward assisting individuals living with chronic, persistent mental illness. Individuals living with responsive behaviours, (ie. wandering, pacing, verbal/physical aggression) can have a negative impact on co-residents' living environment in long-term care homes. Often times when individuals transition into long-term care they may feel isolated, disconnected from their community, experience a decrease in socialization, and a decline in independence. The recreation therapy team embraced "The Cycling Without Age" movement to enhance opportunities for connection and community integration. Through the use of a trishaw, this program was used as a complementary intervention strategy. Working collaboratively with the research team, a pilot study was implemented to examine the outcomes of participation in this particular intervention. It was hypothesized that participation would decrease behaviours and improve overall mood. There is currently no known work that has examined these effects with this specific population (mental health and LTC).

PRESENTED BY:

*Kellie Halligan, CTRS &
Erin Langiano, CTRS*



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PDSA: TESTING CHANGE FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

This session will provide an introduction and practical look at how to use the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model, based on a pilot project at MHAC that aimed to improve patient access to therapeutic spaces with increased resources. PDSA model can help improve programs, show what's working, make a stronger case for the impact of recreation therapy and provides data that can be used to advocate for additional support.

PRESENTED BY:

Charlene Edwards, CTRS



CAN WE COLLABORATE? BRIDGING CERTIFIED THERAPEUTIC RECREATION AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

This session explores the natural alignment between Therapeutic Recreation and social work, highlighting shared values, theories, and opportunities for collaboration. Presenter Ryan Lawlor, BSW, RSW, CTRS, will share practical strategies and real world examples from diverse healthcare settings. Discover how working together can enhance client care and advance person centered, inclusive practice.

PRESENTED BY:

Ryan Lawlor, CTRS, RSW



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MENTAL HEALTH AND THE STRESS RESPONSE

Bailey A. Reid is a registered social worker, mental health professional, and passionate advocate for transformative wellness. With a Master of Social Work in Advanced Critical Practice and Leadership in Social Justice from Memorial University, Bailey brings a depth of clinical experience and a systems-level understanding of the mental health landscape in Newfoundland and Labrador. Drawing on her years of frontline practice and leadership in mental health promotion, Bailey's work focuses on empowering individuals, communities, and workplaces to better understand the stress response and its connection to mental wellness. In her presentations, she integrates evidence-based insights with real-world strategies, helping audiences recognize the signs of the stress response, how to build emotional regulation skills, and foster healthier workplace and personal environments. This presentation focuses on the mind-body connection and offers practical tools and strategies that can be used by staff themselves and therefore implemented as clinical tools with patients. Whether through policy, practice, or education, Bailey is committed to advancing conversations that de-stigmatize mental health and prioritize sustainable well-being for all.

PRESENTED BY:

Bailey Reid, RSW, MSW



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COMMUNITY-BASED PHYSICAL LITERACY

This interactive session will introduce participants to the foundations of physical literacy and its impact across the lifespan. Together, we will explore the key components of physical literacy including motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding, and discuss why they matter for individuals and communities. Through hands-on activities and group discussions, participants will gain practical strategies for supporting diverse ages and abilities in recreation programming. The session aims to spark ideas, share experiences, and begin important conversations about fostering lifelong engagement in physical activity.

PRESENTED BY:

*Dr. Stephanie Field &
Pam Mills, Recreation NL*



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NOURISH YOUR MIND AND BODY: COOKING PROGRAM

The Recreation Development Specialist and Registered Dietitian with the Community Care Program have collaborated on a program called the "Nourish Your Mind and Body Cooking Program." This initiative represents an interdisciplinary effort that aims to improve food literacy and overall mental and physical well-being among residents of the Community Care Program.

Through engaging education and cooking sessions, the program aims to enhance food skills, promote social interaction, increase self-confidence and self-esteem, provide an opportunity to develop a sense of accomplishment, introduce participants to new foods, and develop healthier eating habits. The education piece of the program is developed from Health Canada's Food Guide and its recommendations for healthy eating. Each of the four sessions of the program provides practical knowledge and hands-on experience, empowering participants to improve their health behaviours.

PRESENTED BY:

*Erica Curtis, CTRS &
Jennifer Gregory, RD*



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ELEVATING OUR PRACTICE: ADVANCING THE PROFESSION THROUGH PURPOSEFUL LANGUAGE

This session explores how the language used by practitioners shapes both internal professional identity and external public perception. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data collected from practitioners, we will examine current terminology and communication habits that may unintentionally limit the profession's growth or misrepresent its value. By critically examining current terminology and communication practices, we will uncover how language can reinforce outdated views—or drive meaningful change

PRESENTED BY:

Gillian Batten, CTRS
Dr. Anne-Marie Sullivan, CTRS &
Chloe Burton, CTRS



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RECREATION NL

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador is the provincial association promoting wellness through the practice of recreation. They envision a province of engaged communities where all people embrace the benefits of recreation to enhance their quality of life!



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NLTRA Board of Directors is thrilled to share that NLTRA and Recreation NL will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding at the conference! We look forward to supporting our members and advocating for the importance of recreation and leisure on overall health and well-being in the province!



FROM PERSONAL TO PROFESSIONAL: THE ROLE OF RECREATION THERAPY IN EATING DISORDER RECOVERY

This presentation provides a brief overview of eating disorders, the most common types and explores how they present across various healthcare and community settings not just in mental health. This session will share a personal perspective on how a family journey with an eating disorder revealed the critical but missing potential for Recreation Therapy in Eating Disorder recovery. The session encourages Recreation Therapy professionals to consider how their practice can support identity development, emotional regulation, decrease social isolation and meaningful engagement in the recovery process.

PRESENTED BY:

Charlene Edwards, CTRS



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RE-IMAGINING THERAPEUTIC RECREATION PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE THROUGH POST-QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

There has been a growing emphasis on predicting health outcomes from TR services which is consistent with the dominant post-positivist ideology in broader healthcare influenced by neoliberalism and capitalism. This trend of legitimizing TR through medicalization is concerning because it can lead practitioners to unintentionally engage in overly prescriptive, reductionistic, deterministic, and non-inclusive practices that can cause iatrogenic harm to clients, especially those who are vulnerable or marginalized. In this presentation, I will discuss how my engagement with post-qualitative inquiry during my doctoral studies has helped to illuminate how the philosophy and practice of TR might be re-imagined and re-deployed to become more socially just and dignifying. Drawing on transformative concepts from post-structural theorists like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, I will explain how dominant approaches, orthodoxies, and dogmas have shaped TR practice as we know it, and why the call for deconstructing and re-envisioning our taken-for-granted assumptions might lead the profession to new, remarkable, and provocative terrain. This presentation will serve as a call for practitioners to continue to engage in the creation and re-creation of our beloved profession, and to remain open to thinking differently about what TR might become.

PRESENTED BY:

Silva Hernesniemi, CTRS



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ADVANCING RECREATION THERAPY: A GUIDED APPROACH TO HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH WITHIN NL HEALTH SERVICES

This session will provide Recreation Therapy professionals with a clear, step-by-step overview of how to navigate Health Systems Research within NL Health Services. Participants will gain an understanding of the provincial research process, including required approvals, ethics submissions, and organizational impact considerations. The session will also highlight available supports through Memorial University and NL Health Services to help guide research planning. Whether you're exploring an idea or ready to take the next step, this session offers practical guidance on how to get started and contribute to evidence-informed practice in Recreation Therapy.

PRESENTED BY:

Liam Kelly, Provincial Director
of Innovation &
Research



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CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF WORKING IN CONTINUING CARE IN AN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Let's start the conversation working in a Supportive Living Facility in an Indigenous Community. The standard programs Lea Wood had always used didn't fit. Lea had to rethink everything they thought they knew about Therapeutic Recreation with seniors living in Supportive Living. This session will help participants gain knowledge on Indigenous Culture and explore the uniqueness of working with seniors in a Supportive Living Facility in an Indigenous Community.

PRESENTED BY:

Lea Wood, CTRS



LUNCHTIME DRAG SHOW



Crystal Queer is a pioneer in the local drag community who has graced stages all over the country for the last decade! Her quick wit and fast-paced performances will leave you gagging for more and on the edge of your seat laughing! She's the owner of CQ Events to which you can find her currently producing drag shows all over the province. She's the sassy hair flipping, spinning diva of St. John's, and she's so excited to be a part of this event!

Trish Bish (she/her) is a fierce AFAB drag performer from Newfoundland. With a talent for seamlessly transitioning between high-energy numbers and emotionally charged ballads, she's become a beloved figure on the local scene. Just two years into her career, Trish has already claimed victory in both "Queer of Halloween 2023" and "Drag on George Lip Sync Battle 2024," showcasing her undeniable talent. Trish uses drag as a creative outlet, and her passion for entertaining is evident in every performance. She dreams of sharing her artistry with a larger audience, and with her talent and drive, it's only a matter of time before she achieves that goal.

