



**2024
ATRA
SYMPOSIUM**

**GAME
CHANGERS**

*Where Ideas
Come To Play*

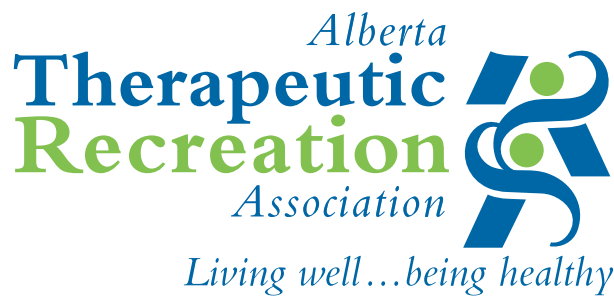


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WELCOME LETTER FROM THE 2024 CHAIR

2024 ATRA Chair Welcome—Denise

Are you tired of the routine, longing for an adventure? Well then, the 2024 ATRA Symposium is for you!

Welcome to the 2024 ATRA Symposium:

Game Changers: Where ideas come to play!

On behalf of the incredibly hard-working Symposium Planning Committee, we are excited to host the 2024 Symposium at the Fantasyland Hotel, in person and virtually, for an eventful couple of days of learning and levelling up your education. Zoom Events is our virtual platform again this year, which will transcend you from your kitchen table at home (or desk at the office) to feel like you are right there with us at the Hotel!

Our Symposium Committee's journey started last year. They have been enthusiastic and committed to bringing you the best experience. I want to give hearts and likes to every one of our committee members; I am so grateful for you and your efforts and could not have done this without you!

ATRA 2024 Symposium Planning Committee: Jayleen Desaunoy, Blanche Chymyz, Alix Norum, Britney Swaffield, Christine Kiddine, and Katelyn Scott.

What is a journey without a pathfinder? ATRA's Symposium Director, Charlotte Jordan was our guide to help us reach our destination! We could not have created such a great event without your knowledge, experience, and countless hours you have dedicated to supporting us. Like so many hours....

This year's symposium brings you breakout sessions from

presenters across Alberta on topics that will equip you to overcome any challenges you encounter. Over the two-day symposium, you will have the opportunity to attend over 10 hours of education. Topics include game-changing ideas for new programs, evidence-based practice, seeing the value of recreation therapy through others' eyes, and being a game changer in your life, - ways to take care of yourself! Not to mention our very special Keynote Speakers; Dr. Susan M. Wilson and Lammarr Oksasikewiyin guiding us to get our badges in becoming "Game Changers."

Let us embark together as Recreation Therapists on the true "Game Changers: Where our ideas come to play" in our day-to-day work! Joining together within our communities of practice, allied health teams, research and education settings, and beyond to overcome barriers and discover our infinite possibilities for ourselves and those we serve!

We are excited to have you join us on our journey online or in person in Edmonton on October 24 & 25, 2024!

Sincerely,



Denise Charron

Chair of the ATRA 2024 Symposium Planning Committee



WELCOME LETTER FROM THE ATRA PRESIDENT

A warm welcome to our in-person and online ATRA 2024 Symposium Delegates!

If you are joining us in Edmonton, I am thrilled to welcome you, on behalf of our Board of Directors, to Treaty Six land. We hope that during your time at the Symposium, you get to enjoy the many beauties of these lands, which are home to numerous groups of Indigenous peoples and Region Four of the Metis Nation of Alberta. We are also excited to welcome our online delegates joining us from numerous treaty lands in Alberta and beyond. As recreation therapists, we truly are game changers, and as such, we can model the honouring of the relationship that Indigenous peoples have with the land, as well as remembering our accountability to address the ongoing impacts of colonization that continue to affect Indigenous peoples.

I feel very connected to our Symposium theme for this year: Game Changers, Where Ideas Come to Play. As a Board, I feel it resonates with us as we have embraced the philosophy of the game-changer! We are eager to bring new ideas and paths forward in serving and achieving the goals of our Association to move the profession forward in Alberta.

Personally and professionally, I am happiest when I can openly exchange ideas with others in safe spaces, and then figure out how to move those ideas into action. This Symposium is the ultimate opportunity for that. Connect with someone new and share an idea. Build on an idea that

someone else has shared with you. Ask a student to share their ideas. Please come and find a Board Member and tell us your ideas. (We are eager to meet you and hear from you!) Take advantage of this opportunity to learn, share, and forge new connections. We are all game-changers, and there is so much power in the sharing.

In closing, the ATRA Board of Directors would like to express great appreciation to the 2024 Symposium Committee. There is such a special sense of excitement throughout the profession when we can host a hybrid Symposium. While it balances our desire to connect in-person with offering accessibility, we know it is tremendous work to provide an exceptional experience for both our in-person and online delegates. We applaud this committee and its volunteers. They have meticulously curated an impressive program, and the Board, our guests and delegates all appreciate your dedication to our collective opportunity to learn and connect.

Yours in the game-changing profession of therapeutic recreation,

Bev Suntjens,



ATRA President



AGENDA

Thursday, October 24, 2024

IME	EVENT / SESSION	ROOM
6:30 a.m.	Morning Energizer: Drums Alive - Christina Start	12
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Registration Table Open	Concourse
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast & Vendors Open	6 & 5
8:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.	Day 1: Housekeeping, Announcements & Welcome from President, Chair & Symposium Producer	6
8:15 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. 1.5 education hours = 0.15 CEU	Opening Keynote: Change the Player, Change the Game - Dr. Susan Wilson	6
9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. 1.5 education hours = 0.15 CEU	Professional Advancement Session - ATRA Board of Directors	6
11:30 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.	Snack Break	
11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. 1.0 education hours = 0.1 CEU	Break Out Session #1: Canvas in Motion: Exploring the Interaction of Art & Equine Assisted Therapy - Amanda Ervin	6
	Break Out Session #1: Practicing Compassion, Building Resilience: The Unequivocal Value of Seeing Worth - Tannis Chartier	12
	Break Out Session #1: Evidence-Based Program Planning for Post Secondary Education - Developing the Foundation for Professional Competency in Students - Jaclyn England	14
	Break Out Session #1: Better Sleep: Developing Healthy Leisure Habits to Improve Quality of Sleep - Mandy Wright	15
12:45 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch	6
1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. 1.5 education hours = 0.15 CEU	Break Out Session #2: No Longer "Us & Them": Creating Collaborative Care Teams for Person-Centred Care - Katelyn Scott; Dr. Sienna Caspar; Kaitlyn Edwards	6
	Break Out Session #2: "My Story" Poster: Using Professionalism and the APIE-D Process to Create a Collaborative Resource that Combines Visual Aids with a Strength Approach to Increase Person-Centred Care & Enhance Leisure Experiences - Emily Thomson; Beverley Cunningham	12
	Break Out Session #2: "Living with a brain that lies." A RecT Lived Experience with OCD - Jennifer Masek	14
	Break Out Session #2: Geography as a Game Changer: How Geographical & Culture Impact Leisure Values, Awareness & Practice - Hailey Kanak	15



AGENDA CONT'

TME	EVENT / SESSION	ROOM
3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Snack Break	
3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. 1 educational hour = 0.1 CEU 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. 1.5 education hours = 0.15 CEU	Break Out Session #3: Your Professional Identity as a RecT: Game Changing as your Career Advances - Bev Suntjens *Please note this is a 90 minute session*	6
	Break Out Session #3: Rhythms of Life: Connecting Hearts & Building Community Through Rhythm - Erin Bates; Allie Smorodin *Please note this is a 60 minute session*	10
	Break Out Session #3: Oh, the Places You Will Go! Moving Your Career Forward Through Grad School: 4 Perspectives on Different Areas of Growing Your Practice - Emily Thomson; Heather Craig; Tiffany Morin; Amanda Ervin *Please note this is a 90 minute session*	12
	Break Out Session #3: The Covenant Café: Designing Third Places for Client Needs & Interests - Jonas Cornelson *Please note this is a 60 minute session*	14
	Break Out Session #3: Desirable Length of Time for Engaging Clients with Moderate Dementia in Preferred TR Intervention: A Pilot Study - Rena Walker *Please note this is a 60 minute session*	15
5:00 p.m.	Wrap up Day 1 & Housekeeping CE	6
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Vendor Hour – Meet our amazing vendors & get your passport filled to be entered to win a prize!	5
7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.	Social Activity- Board Game Cafe	6
Friday, October 25, 2024		
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast Educator's Breakfast - please see marked tables	6
7:45 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Day 2: Welcome/Housekeeping	6
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	Annual General Meeting (AGM) – ATRA Board of Directors	6
9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	Break	5
9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. 1 education hour = 0.1 CEU	Break Out Session #4: "I Don't Feel Like It" Roots of Motivation & Applying them to Practice & Life - Jennifer Schmidt	6
	Break Out Session #4: The Development of a Simulation-Based Assessment Tool for Therapeutic Recreation Education Program – Erin Turnell	12
	Break Out Session #4: TR, Neurodiversity & Neuro Affirming Care - Tommias Ksiazek	14
	Break Out Session #4: Experience of Adults with Substance Use; Mental Health & Homelessness Issues: A Combined 12 Step Faith Based & Complementary TR Interventions - Amanda Ervin; Vanessa Irvine	15
10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Snack Break & Vendors	5 & 6



AGENDA CONT'

TIME	EVENT / SESSION	ROOM
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 1.5 education hours = 0.15 CEU	Break Out Session #5: Social Isolation & Loneliness in Older Adults: Integrating Clinical Guidelines for Meaningful Practice Change - Nick Ubels & Lisa Tinley- Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health	6
	Break Out Session #5 : Silver Lining Adult Day Program: Meeting the Needs of the community - the development & implementation of an adult day program - Kayley McCormack; Smiley Rana; Nicole Kulba	12
	Break Out Session #5: Taking Your Research Ideas to the Next Level! Devan McNeill; Tiffany Morin; Mandy Wright; Shintaro Kono (Pre-symposium work required for this session)	14
	Break Out Session #5: Nature's Rx: Exploring Nature's Potential in Rec Therapy Treatment - Elyssa Seite	15
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	ATRA Awards Ceremony Lunch	6
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Break	
1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. 1.0 education hour = 0.1 CEU	Break Out Session #6: Thank You for Teaching Me Beer Pong: Community Led Recreation Programming for Youth Experiencing Disability - Amanda Ebert & Equality Fitness & Recreation Social Group	6
	Break Out Session #6: Learning how to Lead Little Leisure Leaders: The Process of Creating an Intergenerational Day Program - Alison Dawyd; Erin Dickinson	12
	Break Out Session #6: NCTRC Overview of Services - Kerry Steed	14
	Break Out Session #6: Kits with Kim: A Reminiscing Experience. A Demonstration of Sensory Reminiscing Therapy Delivered for Late Stage Dementia - Kim Dizak	15
2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Snack Break	
3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. 1.5 education hours = 0.15 CEU	Closing Keynote: Traditional Games- Lamarr Oksasikewiyin	6
4:30 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.	Closing Remarks: Thank you for Coming - see you in 2025!	6



KEYNOTES

CHANGE THE PLAYER, CHANGE THE GAME!

SESSION DESCRIPTION

The world of therapeutic recreation is constantly changing. New protocols, new policies, and new stakeholders. At times we can feel left behind or even left out of the conversation. This can increase stress for both the professional and the profession. As a profession, we have the tools to deal with stress. This session will examine the demands of a TR professional and how to address them using humour and play.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Articulate at least one-way stress impacts both the individual professional and the profession at large
- Articulate and consider the merits of using the components of play and humour in your work.
- Articulate at least two specific ways to use humour and play to reduce the stress on yourself.



DR. SUSAN WILSON

Dr. Susan Wilson has been a recreational therapy educator for over 30 years. She has degrees from Western Washington University, Central Michigan University and Clemson University. Currently, she is an Associate Professor and Chair of The Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department at SUNY Cortland. Dr. Wilson has presented on topics such as aging, humour, compassionate care, advocacy, accretion, and other issues related to recreational therapy over the years. She has held many positions with the New York State Therapeutic Recreation Association including president and conference chair. She serves her community on several boards as well as serving on the Cortland County legislature. She lives in Cortland, NY with her partner and their two wonderful dogs.

TRADITIONAL GAMES

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Traditional Indigenous games were primarily used for survival but have since been used to ensure cultural survival. In this session, you will learn traditional Indigenous games presented by Lamarr Oksasikewiyin. Learn games that engage core strength, play & laughter, dexterity, pain management, expression, and growth through mastering your discomfort.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Learn at least two ways in which Indigenous culture and play can contribute to learning and personal growth.
- Learn the primary way laughter is a healing element in Indigenous culture.
- Learn at least three traditional Indigenous games, and how you do not need to rely on current technology.



LAMARR OKSASIKEWIYIN

Lamarr is originally from Sweetgrass First Nation. His career was in Education, since graduating from the University of Saskatchewan in 1996 (taught mostly middle grades) with a focus on land-based learning. Lamarr has presented traditional games since 2007 across Western and Eastern Canada, Brazil, and New Zealand. Lamarr grew up playing these games and in reflection saw teachings worth sharing with a special focus on using traditional games to teach outcomes in schools.



DINAH OXEDIN

Dinah Oxebin is a queen of all trades. She has been in the labor field most of her career. She has assisted Lamarr in Traditional Games workshops for the past few years. She is a mother of three amazing girls and works for the City of Saskatoon.



PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT SESSIONS

ATRA's Board of Directors will reflect on changes that have been made since our last Professional Advancement Session and will also share a new vision for ATRA. In alignment with our Strategic Plan, this session will discuss membership categories and how this impacts our regulation efforts.

PRESENTERS

The ATRA Board of Directors and Staff:

BEV SUNTJENS
GERALDA VAN DER MEJDEN
JODIE VAN SPRONSEN
MAEGAN CIESIELSKI
NICOLE BRANDER
AMANDA ERVIN



SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION:

LEARNING HOW TO LEAD LITTLE LEISURE LEADERS: THE PROCESS OF CREATING AN INTERGENERATIONAL DAY PROGRAM WITH ALISON DAWYD AND ERIN DICKENSON

It is well known that intergenerational relationships benefit both age groups, but bringing together seniors and children for an all-day program has its challenges. In this session, we will explain the process of developing an intergenerational day program, the benefits observed, and the challenges endured. By sharing our experiences, you will better understand how to create a program that benefits children and seniors.

**Alison Dawyd, Recreation Therapist/ Manager**

Alison Dawyd's journey into Recreation Therapy began with a childhood aspiration to spend as much time as possible with her elderly neighbour, Mrs. Stoutenberg, who had a kind smile, Barbies, and an unlimited supply of cookies. Initially drawn to the prestige of a medical degree, Alison was accepted into the pre-med program at UNBC with the full intention of becoming a Gerontologist. After 5 million hours of studying for exams in subjects of no interest to her, she realized she'd rather be creative and have fun than the obligation to assist a sick person on an airplane. Her new realization led to a transfer to the U of A to complete her Degree and submit a half-hearted application to the Masters of Physio Program. Their rejection letter put a curve ball in that plan but did not quench her love of student loans. She returned as an undergrad once again to pursue her BARST degree. She joined the Geriatric team at the Glenrose Hospital for her final practicum. Even though she created a scent activity that flopped and accidentally followed her preceptor into the bathroom, she was offered a job and worked as an invaluable part of the Geriatric team for seven years. Those seven years included three maternity leaves that would have concluded in 2020, but COVID destroyed her ability to outsource childcare, and she decided to stay home.

Once her youngest could toilet independently, she seized an opportunity at the Sherwood Park day program, where she spearheaded Canada's first intergenerational day program and made herself invaluable once again. Alison currently spends her time listening to audiobooks at double the recorded speed, crocheting her dad a sweater that was originally for his birthday in April, never seeing her husband because all they do is transport their four daughters to various sports, and working with a fantastic team at Leisure Days Adult Day Support Services.

**Erin Dickinson, CTRS/ Director**

Erin Dickinson's journey to Recreation Therapy is much like others, spending her childhood running wild on the farm or visiting elderly neighbours with her grandmother after church.

Originally planning to enter nursing, Erin took a high school summer internship at a long-term care facility, working within the Recreation and Occupational Therapy Department. Because of this experience, she knew Recreation Therapy was her future as there is no other profession that allows you to use people's interests and skills to help them grow and have fun, all while enhancing their quality of life. Plus, you can serve people beer sometimes.

Erin's educational journey began at NorQuest College, where she completed the Therapeutic Recreation Diploma program. After gaining practical experience as a Recreation Therapist in various long-term care facilities, she found her way back to the program of her first internship, the Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan Day Program. Her return was met with a warm welcome as if she was coming home. As Norquest College and the University of Lethbridge partnered to create the UofL Bachelor's Degree in Therapeutic Recreation, Erin and her friends decided to be the pioneers and work their way through the initial distance option. By 2020, a very pregnant and recent U of L grad, Erin, wrote and passed her certification exam from NCTRC. Today, as the executive director of the transformed day program of her original internship, Erin's impact on the community is undeniable. Transforming the organization to a non-profit and rebranding it to Leisure Days, she continues to serve those in her community and is working to expand into more rural settings. All these initiatives are a testament to her dedication and the incredible team that makes the organization one of a kind.



PRESENTATION:
EXPERIENCE OF ADULTS WITH SUBSTANCE USE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND HOMELESSNESS ISSUES: A COMBINED 12-STEP FAITH-BASED PROGRAM AND COMPLEMENTARY THERAPEUTIC RECREATION INTERVENTIONS WITH AMANDA ERVIN AND VANESSA IRVINE

This session will describe the findings of a research study conducted in Southern Alberta that examined the experiences of 12 adults with Substance Use Disorder (SUD), Mental Health (MH), and homelessness issues. Participants in the study engaged in various evidence-based practice (EBP). TR-led activities involving complementary, integrative health (CIH), adventure team building, and creative arts combined with a 12-step faith-based recovery meeting.


Amanda Ervin, Msc, CTRS

Amanda Ervin is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and earned her bachelor's degree in Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Lethbridge in 2020. She attended Lethbridge College many years ago and earned her diploma in Therapeutic Recreation- Gerontology. Amanda earned her Master of Science degree in Health Sciences from the University of Lethbridge. Her research focused on how adapted recreation therapy impacts quality of life, well-being, and social and personal relationships. Amanda is a Research Assistant at the University of Lethbridge and an Instructor at Bow Valley College & Lethbridge College. She is the Executive Director of the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association.


Vanessa Irvine, CTRS

Vanessa Irvine is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and began her journey in Therapeutic Recreation in 2018. She graduated from the Lethbridge College Therapeutic Recreation- Gerontology program in 2020 and completed her Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Lethbridge, graduating in 2022. Vanessa worked closely with Dr. Lyn Litchke as a U of L student, assisting with the research she was conducting and eventually collaborating to write her first research article alongside Amanda Ervin and Dr. Lyn Litchke. Vanessa has been a member of the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association and Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Associations throughout her education and career thus far. She began her career in May of 2022 as a Therapy Assistant in various sites across southern Alberta. She works as a Recreation Therapist with Alberta Health Services South Zone Therapeutic Recreation in Cardston and Raymond.

PRESENTATION:
CANVAS IN MOTION: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF ART AND EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY WITH AMANDA ERVIN

This session will explore how the expressive nature of art, combined with the profound connections formed through interactions with horses, can enhance therapeutic outcomes for participants across their lifespan.


Amanda Ervin, Msc, CTRS

Amanda Ervin is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and earned her bachelor's degree in Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Lethbridge in 2020. She attended Lethbridge College many years ago and earned her diploma in Therapeutic Recreation- Gerontology. Amanda earned her Master of Science degree in Health Sciences from the University of Lethbridge. Her research focused on how adapted recreation therapy impacts quality of life, well-being, and social and personal relationships. Amanda is a Research Assistant at the University of Lethbridge and an Instructor at Bow Valley College & Lethbridge College. She is the Executive Director of the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association.

PRESENTATION:
NATURE'S RX: EXPLORING NATURE'S POTENTIAL IN RECREATION THERAPY TREATMENT WITH ELYSSA SELTE

Embark on a journey where we dive into the fusion of nature therapy with recreation therapy treatment and the impact of connecting with nature on one's overall well-being. Participants will learn practical strategies and approaches for incorporating nature-based interventions into their therapeutic recreation toolkit through engaging in activities and discussions. Walk away equipped with valuable tools and insights to enhance client outcomes and promote well-being through connection with nature.





Elyssa Selte, Recreation Therapist II

Elyssa Selte is a dedicated professional passionate about enhancing well-being through Therapeutic Recreation and nature. Her journey began with completing a Diploma in Therapeutic Recreation at NorQuest College, followed by a Bachelor's degree in Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Lethbridge. Throughout her educational pursuits, Elyssa gained valuable hands-on experience through practicum placements in Long Term Care and Brain Injury Rehabilitation, laying the foundation for her career. Elyssa is a Recreation Therapist II for Alberta Health Services in Long-Term Care. Inspired by a guest speaker during her studies at NorQuest, Elyssa recognized the potential synergy between Recreation Therapy and Nature and Forest Therapy. This led her to pursue certification as a Nature and Forest Therapy guide through the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, further enhancing her skill set and deepening her understanding of holistic wellness practices. Driven by her passion for promoting well-being and her belief in the transformative power of nature, Elyssa established 'Come Hug A Tree,' a venture dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of recreation, leisure, and nature to one's well-being. Additionally, she partners with 'Tinihabitat,' a platform created by researchers at the University of Edinburgh that aims to provide a diverse range of nature-related information and services to individuals seeking to strengthen their connection with nature.

PRESENTATION:

'MY STORY' POSTER: USING PROFESSIONALISM AND THE APIE-D PROCESS TO CREATE A COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE THAT COMBINES VISUAL AIDS WITH A STRENGTHS APPROACH TO INCREASE PERSON-CENTRED CARE AND ENHANCE LEISURE EXPERIENCES WITH BEVERLY CUNNINGHAM AND EMILY THOMSON

The 'My Story' project is a personal information tool that provides a snapshot of residents' lives, values, and preferences to share with care staff. The presenters will share the development and innovation of the poster through evidence-based practice (research, literature, selection of visuals and content) and the implementation process (steps on how to successfully integrate it into your practice).



Beverley Cunningham, Ba, BHSc

Beverley is a recent Spring 2024 graduate of the University of Lethbridge's Therapeutic Recreation Program. Beverley was first introduced to Recreation Therapy when she worked alongside the recreation team at a Long-Term Care site as a Comfort Care Aid during the COVID-19 pandemic. When not at her job as a Recreation Assistant, Beverley can be found thrifting for antiques or enjoying the outdoors with her children and dogs.



Emily Thomson, Ba, CTRS MHSM

Emily has always had a passion for working with seniors, starting her journey by working various jobs at an assisted living facility in high school, which led her to pursue a degree in recreation and leisure. Over the last ten years, she has held different positions as an activity coordinator, seniors' fitness instructor, and recreation therapist in an adult day program/long-term care/alternate level of care/continuing care. She is now a manager in LTC.

PRESENTATION:

"THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME BEER PONG!": COMMUNITY-LED RECREATION PROGRAMMING FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING DISABILITY WITH AMANDA EBERT AND THE EQUALITY FITNESS & RECREATION SOCIAL GROUP

The Equality Fitness & Recreation Social Group is a grassroots community recreation program in the Greater Edmonton area. This social group consists of young adults experiencing disability who want the opportunity to pursue recreation opportunities in a self-directed manner with peers similar in age. This unique program is led directly by the participants and is supported by Equality Fitness & Recreation staff and volunteers to ensure its success. The participatory nature of the program allows group members the freedom to selectively engage with different events while always remaining a member of the overall group. We will be discussing how using a grassroots community-based approach in all steps of the development and ongoing planning for this group has led to the program's success.




Amanda Ebert, Bscin, Ma; Autism Exercise Specialist & The EFR Social Group

Amanda is a recreation & physical activity consultant with Equality Fitness & Recreation. She also teaches in the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, & Recreation at the University of Alberta and has supported children and youth living with impairment for over 15 years.

The important people in this presentation are the Equality Fitness Social group. These youth, all experiencing disability in specific contexts, are powerful, strong, brave individuals who have created an outstanding program that provides opportunities to pursue recreation in ways that are meaningful to them.

PRESENTATION:
RHYTHMS OF LIFE: CONNECTING HEARTS AND BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH RHYTHM WITH ERIN BATES AND ALLIE SMORODIN

The Brenda Strafford Foundation's (BSF) Rhythms of Life Drum Circles have been a part of our core therapeutic recreation programs since 2020. This has allowed our therapeutic recreation team to develop knowledge and skills to adapt this program to the needs of those living in continuing care. This presentation will focus on the key learnings from implementing drum circles at the BSF sites, focusing on the needs and capabilities of older adult populations in independent living, supportive living, long-term care, and memory care.


Erin Bates, Innovation Specialist With CLIQ

Erin began with The Brenda Strafford Foundation in 2011. As Manager of Therapeutic Recreation and Volunteer Services, she focused on enhancing the quality of life for a diverse resident population. Efforts led to implementing a new drumming program that has since expanded to enrich the lives of many across BSF. Since then, Erin's roles include Adult Day Program Manager, Hospitality Manager, Resource Development Specialist, and Innovation Specialist within the CLIQ Team. Collaborating with different stakeholders, she leads projects from ideation to execution, with the mission of driving innovation across all aspects of BSF operations.


Allie Smorodin, Quality Improvement Specialist With CLIQ

Allie Smorodin is the Quality Improvement Specialist at the Brenda Strafford Foundation. Her passion for innovation and learning has fueled a recent pivot from her position as a dietitian to working with the CLIQ team, where she supports the BSF's continuing care and social impact areas with quality improvement initiatives. She has been a part of the BSF since 2020, and in her spare time, she enjoys travelling, creating art, and spending time outdoors.

PRESENTATION:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SIMULATION-BASED ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR THERAPEUTIC RECREATION EDUCATION PROGRAMS WITH ERIN TRUNELL

This session will explore the changing field of TR education. Unlike many other healthcare education programs, which have established assessments to measure students' clinical judgement and competencies, TR education lacks an established assessment tool that measures practical skills and competencies. This session will focus on researching and developing an assessment tool to assess student readiness to complete their final clinical placement before graduating and entering clinical practice.


ERIN TURNELL, PROGRAM CHAIR, THERAPEUTIC RECREATION DIPLOMA PROGRAM

Erin Turnell is the Program Chair and instructor in the Therapeutic Recreation Diploma (TRD) Program at NorQuest College. Erin's career in recreation therapy spans over two decades, with experience working as a recreation therapist in various healthcare settings, including assisted living, adult day programs, acute care, and community rehabilitation. When an opportunity to teach recreation therapy at NorQuest College was presented, Erin combined her love for recreation therapy and her passion for teaching with a move into a new career path as a post-secondary instructor. Recognizing that her work in adult education has not fully evolved, she continually seeks new opportunities to expand her knowledge of how to educate best those seeking their own personal and professional development. Erin recently completed a Master of Education in Health Sciences



Education (M.Ed HSE) and is pursuing her CTRS. Erin spends her leisure time playing the cello, exploring the Rocky Mountains with her family, enjoying the beautiful Edmonton River Valley, and watching football games!

PRESENTATION:
PRESENTATION: NO LONGER “US AND THEM”: CREATING COLLABORATIVE CARE TEAMS FOR PERSON-CENTRED CARE WITH KATELYN SCOTT, KAITLYN EDWARDS AND DR. SIENNA CASPAR

In this interactive session, you will learn about a recent study that utilized the Feasible and Sustainable Culture Change Initiative (FASCCI) Model to increase the use of a leisure intervention (Tovertafel/Magic Table) by an interdisciplinary team in a residential care home. A significant outcome of this study was the development of meaningful relationships and experiences between nursing, therapeutic recreation, spiritual care, volunteers, families, and residents! You will learn how an interdisciplinary team transformed their perspectives and care routines to be more person-centred, collaborative, and holistic. The session will guide you through breakout activities, encouraging you to share ideas and increase your understanding of applying this information to your professional practice.


Katelyn Scott, CTRS, BTR, Instructor II

Katelyn is a CTRS and Dementia Care Specialist who shares her passion and excitement for therapeutic recreation as an instructor at the University of Lethbridge in the Faculty of Health Sciences—Therapeutic Recreation program. As part of her master’s thesis, Katelyn completed a mixed-methods case study to explore the organizational contexts which enable or impede the translation of evidence-based practice into direct client care. Katelyn worked closely with Dr. Sienna Caspar to launch the Relational Care Knowledge Hub and the Therapeutic Recreation Centre of Excellence. She volunteers actively with Resilient Rec YQL, AdaptABLE Outdoors, Lethbridge Therapeutic Riding Association, ATRA, CTRA, and other TR partners.


Kaitlyn Edwards, BTR, CTRS, Recreation Therapy Manager

Kaitlyn is a dedicated professional who graduated from the University of Lethbridge Therapeutic Recreation degree program. Kaitlyn has been practicing as a Recreation Therapist for the past ten years in community and clinical settings. She has primarily worked with older adults in residential care homes, acute geriatric psychiatry, and adult day support programs in the community. Kaitlyn’s educational journey also brought her to other parts of Canada, and she completed her CTRS internship in Riverview, New Brunswick.

Kaitlyn’s passion has been in mental health and geriatrics, and she strives to deliver meaningful recreation and leisure pursuits that showcase her resident’s strengths and abilities while providing a person-centred approach to care. She’s also had the opportunity to be a part of several quality improvement initiatives which aim to break down barriers, incorporate evidence-informed practices, and modify approaches to meet the diverse needs of the residents she works with.

Outside of her professional life, Kaitlyn enjoys a variety of activities. She can often be found hiking in the mountains, paddleboarding and kayaking on several lakes, attending group fitness classes at F45, and cherishing time with her husband and their fun-loving Boston Terrier, Willis – aka Willy!


Sienna Caspar, PHD, CTRS, Associate Professor

Before pursuing her graduate studies, Sienna worked in long-term care homes in Canada and the United States for over 20 years as both a CTRS and a consultant. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Lethbridge in the Faculty of Health Sciences—Therapeutic Recreation program. Her research interests include organizational behaviour, leadership, teamwork, non-pharmacological treatment of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, recreational therapy, and culture change. She is also the Executive Director of the Centre of Excellence for TR in Continuing Care.



PRESENTATION:
OH, THE PLACES YOU WILL GO! MOVING YOUR CAREER FORWARD THROUGH GRAD SCHOOL: FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON DIFFERENT AREAS OF GROWING YOUR PRACTICE WITH TIFFANY MORIN, EMILY THOMSON, HEATHER CRAIG, AND AMANDA ERVIN

Join four professional ATRA members who have completed graduate school in the past 18 months for this interactive and interesting session on graduate studies. How has it impacted their TR practice? Job opportunities? Community connections? Tips and tricks? Funding? We will cover it all.


Tiffany Morin, MSc, CTRS, Instructor

Tiffany Morin (MSc, CTRS) has been working in therapeutic recreation for over 20 years, taking her across the globe. She has practiced in New Zealand, Australia, the USA, and Canada. Tiffany has a diploma in therapeutic recreation (gerontology) from Lethbridge College, a therapeutic recreation technician (TRT) certificate from Salt Lake Community College, a bachelor's degree in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (CRDS) from the University of Calgary, and a master's degree in Community Health Sciences from the University of Calgary. Tiffany has experience with various populations, but most recently, she worked in neurorehabilitation with Alberta Health Services in Calgary, Alberta. This motivated her to partner with the Stroke Recovery Association of Calgary for her master's degree research project with young stroke survivors and their experiences with the local peer support program. You will now find her teaching in the Therapeutic Recreation degree program at the University of Lethbridge. In her free time, Tiffany fully engages in all sorts of leisure activities: hiking, camping, cooking, painting, beading, travelling, and volunteering for Ovarian Cancer Canada, Rocky Mountain Adaptive, and folk music festivals.


Emily Thomson, BA, CTRS, MHSM

Emily has always had a passion for working with seniors. She started her journey working various jobs at an assisted living facility in high school, which led her to pursue a degree in recreation and leisure. Over the last 10 years, she has held different positions as an activity coordinator, seniors' fitness instructor, and recreation therapist in an adult day program/long-term care/alternate level of care/continuing care and is now a manager in LTC.


Heather Craig, BA, MA

Heather Craig joined the City of Edmonton in 2007 as the Special Needs Recreation Liaison. In 2017, she transitioned again to Accessibility Services Officer, where she led the accessibility policy redevelopment and has been working on the policy implementation since the policy was approved in 2019. In addition, Heather also works with City programs, projects, and services, providing an accessibility lens and technical design reviews using her RHFAC (Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification) professional designation. Heather graduated in 2006 from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Arts in Recreation and Leisure Studies (B.A.R.L.S). She recently completed her Master of Arts Degree in the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation.


Amanda Ervin, MSc, CTRS

Amanda Ervin is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) and earned her bachelor's degree in Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Lethbridge in 2020. She attended Lethbridge College many years ago and earned her diploma in Therapeutic Recreation- Gerontology. Amanda earned her Master of Science degree in Health Sciences from the University of Lethbridge. Her research focused on how adapted recreation therapy impacts quality of life, well-being, and social and personal relationships. Amanda is a Research Assistant at the University of Lethbridge and an Instructor at Bow Valley College & Lethbridge College. She is the Executive Director of the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association.



PRESENTATION:**GEOGRAPHY AS A GAME-CHANGER: HOW GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND CULTURE IMPACT LEISURE VALUES, AWARENESS AND PRACTICES WITH HAILEY KANAK**

By attending this breakout session, participants will understand how geographical location and cultural norms impact one's leisure values, awareness, and practices so we, as professionals, can better serve our clients. This interactive, discussion-based presentation will cover the topics of the historical context of leisure, the relationship between leisure and geographical location, how the culture of individuals and regions impact leisure choices, the relationship of social science concepts, as well as leisure involvement across the lifespan, has an impact on leisure behaviours. Participants will also apply their knowledge through worksheet tools to aid thoughts, discussion, and future practice.

**Hailey Kanak, Recreation Therapy Assistant**

Hailey graduated from NorQuest College's Therapeutic Recreation Diploma Program in 2018 and has been a recreation therapy assistant since. In 2019, Hailey graduated with NorQuest's Mental Health Recovery Practitioner Certificate. Hailey is a dedicated lifelong learner who constantly seeks new learning opportunities regarding therapeutic recreation and the broader human services field. Much of Hailey's practice has been in rural and northern Alberta, where she currently practices in Fort McMurray in Geriatrics, Dementia Care, and new Alternate Level of Care/Transitional Rehab. In 2023, Hailey Became a Certified Dementia Care Provider (CDCP). Currently, Hailey also serves on the ATRA BOD as Grant Program Director. Hailey is passionate about improving the well-being of older adults living in care and providing them with exciting recreation and leisure opportunities later in life. When Hailey isn't working, you can find her tap dancing, playing curling, cross-country skiing, kayaking, spending time outdoors, and socializing with friends.

PRESENTATION:**EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM PLANNING IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION - DEVELOPING THE FOUNDATION FOR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY IN STUDENTS, WITH JACLYN ENGLAND**

Evidence-based practice is the key to understanding trends in Therapeutic Recreation (TR) practice, ensuring the delivery of quality interventions, and advancing the field of TR. This session will explore how the Therapeutic Recreation Diploma Program at NorQuest College is using evidence to inspire students by creating capstone projects they can use in future practice. You will hear first-hand from students how they followed the Knowledge Translation Action Cycle to create meaningful, quality TR interventions based on current, reliable evidence.

**Jaclyn England, Instructor**

Jaclyn England is a Recreation Therapist with over 15 years of experience in various healthcare settings. She is an Instructor with the Therapeutic Recreation Diploma Program at NorQuest College. Jaclyn is a compassionate leader who takes any opportunity to share her love of Therapeutic Recreation. Jaclyn is passionate about people and has learned that making genuine connections is the key to success. Using her knowledge from working as an RTA, RecT and RecT II throughout her career, she utilizes storytelling to share her experiences with learners so they can envision the incredible impact TR has and have a laugh at the same time. Jaclyn lives with her family in Stony Plain and loves to travel, sing with her kids in the car, tap dance, play slow pitch, and get together with family and friends.

PRESENTATION:**"LIVING WITH A BRAIN THAT LIES" A RECREATION THERAPIST'S LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER, WITH JENNIFER MASEK**

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, a psychiatric disorder, is often misunderstood and misdiagnosed. It takes an average of 14-17 years from the time OCD begins for people to obtain proper treatment. In this session, you will learn to debunk the common misconceptions about OCD. You will learn the truth, understand treatment, and learn therapeutic recreation intervention for the neurobiological disorder. Jennifer will take you through her journey of OCD recovery, self-discovery, and incorporation of the Alberta OCD Foundation. When you know what's really "so OCD," you'll stop using it as an adjective.





Jennifer Masek

Jennifer received a BPE from the University of Alberta in 2007 and has worked as a Recreation Therapist in Edmonton for 16 years. Jennifer is currently employed with CapitalCare Dickinsfield. She finds fulfilment in working with young adults in the Young Adult Day Support (YADS) Homecare Program and LTC. Jennifer is the founder and Executive Director of the Alberta OCD Foundation. Jennifer spends much of her time outdoors, including backpacking in the mountains, whitewater canoeing, motorcycling, gardening, and winter sports. Jennifer enjoys spending time with her partner, two dogs, Mahnee and Lucy and two cats, Dolly and Willow.

PRESENTATION:

"I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT" – THE ROOTS OF MOTIVATION AND APPLYING THEM TO PRACTICE AND LIFE WITH JENNIFER SCHMIDT

If motivation were simple, we'd all be motivated all the time! However, client and personal motivation can be elusive, and finding enough to support wellness can be a challenge! In this session, we'll untangle motivation's physiological and psychological roots and learn practical strategies for applying them to our professional and personal lives.



Jennifer Schmidt, Recreation Therapist

Jennifer, a Mental Health Mentor and owner of Ignite Health Coaching and Wellness is a beacon of hope for depressed and anxious endurance athletes. With her professional experience as a Recreation Therapist and Functional Medicine-Certified Health Coach, Jennifer navigates the intricate physiological connections between mental health and athletic performance. She implements therapeutic recreation interventions and lifestyle changes to empower her clients, helping them feel their best and achieve even better performance.

Jennifer lives in the Canadian Rockies. When she's not working, she's training for triathlons, reading, and enjoying deep conversations.

PRESENTATION:

THE COVENANT CAFÉ: DESIGNING THIRD PLACES FOR CLIENT NEEDS AND INTERESTS, WITH JONAS CORNELSEN

Recreation therapy activities in continuing care are often highly structured. The Covenant Café project asks: what if a place, and its assets, were the core of a program? Project lead Jonas explores why a facilitated "third place" (Oldenburg, 1989) on your site enhances choice and independence for clients.



Jonas Cornelsen, Recreation Assistant

Jonas Cornelsen is known as "the coffee guy" at work. He is a Recreation Assistant with Covenant Care, running a drop-in café and social hub serving St. Marguerite and Holy Cross Manor. Jonas loves to talk about how great places and coffee bring people together. He will also endlessly discuss all genres of music, electric bicycles, and non-alcoholic beer.

PRESENTATION:

NCTRC OVERVIEW OF SERVICES WITH KERRY STEEB

This session will focus on various aspects of the NCTRC Certification Program, including applying for professional eligibility, recertification requirements, and designations in specialization areas. The speaker will also provide an overview of special projects and NCTRC news from the past year.



Kerry Steeb, Credentialing Specialist, CSR Focus

Kerry Steeb is a Credentialing Specialist for the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification, focusing on the organization's Corporate Social Responsibility Programs. Kerry started her Therapeutic Recreation Career at Dalhousie University in her home province of Nova Scotia. Her internship took her to Missouri State University's teaching hospital and has kept her south of the border ever since. Kerry has been a CTRS for 22 years, and her "eclectic" career has led her all over the USA to jobs with various populations. Her 3 top loves about TR are: 1) advocating for the profession, 2) gaining client wisdom, and 3) sharing knowledge. Kerry has led over 300 dementia education seminars for professional caregivers, family caregivers, and young onset people with the diagnosis and presented on Pediatric TR Programs at the American Therapeutic Recreation



Association and The Pediatric Complex Care National Conferences. When Kerry is not thinking about TR, she is thinking about dogs. She is an Associate Board Member for a Foster Dog Rescue called "One Tail at a Time" in the Pacific Northwest, where she lives with her husband and two rescue dogs - Dutchess and Colonel Mustard.

PRESENTATION:
KITS WITH KIM: A REMINISCING EXPERIENCE. A DEMONSTRATION OF A SENSORY, REMINISCING THERAPY DELIVERED FOR LATE STAGE DEMENTIA WITH KIMBERLY DIZAK

At this session, 40 themed kits will be available. Each kit contains objects, pictures, scents, music and visual clips related to that theme. The facilitator will review the kits and sensory cues that evoke memories from the past in a fun and interactive format that includes many of the domains of recreation therapy. The kit contains physical objects the recipient can hold for both a physical and visual sensation. Sensory Therapy can be challenging to begin at your site due to the enormous task of building the kits and having a variety to choose from regularly, having a trained staff that is familiar with the kit's contents to facilitate a quality program and ensuring that the evaluation tools are reporting qualitative measurable results.


Kimberly Dizak, Recreation Therapist

I grew up in Edson, where I started volunteering at a nursing home hospital. I volunteered so many hours; this is when I realized that having fun with many grandparents could be a job. After attending Lethbridge College and Grant MacEwan, I worked at Long Term Care and Lodge Living. I was always ambitious in my career and constantly challenged myself to take on big projects. I started the Great Knitting Giveaway and held a baby Halloween party with my seniors, which was the "top activity" for the city that year for things to do with kids. I converted my DSL4-D unit into a memory unit. My love for antiques, recreation and seniors (no pun intended) has finally come together into my perfect career. Not only can I make one group of seniors happy and give them a meaningful program, but I can reach all of Alberta endlessly. People comment after I meet them that I have a passion for seniors, but it goes beyond that; I genuinely love my job, and this takes it to a level that I have never been more excited to be part of.

PRESENTATION:
BETTER SLEEP - DEVELOPING HEALTHY LEISURE HABITS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF SLEEP WITH MANDY WRIGHT

In this session, participants will learn about the Better Sleep - Developing Healthy Leisure Habits to Improve Quality of Sleep program developed by Mandy Wright (CTRS). Better Sleep is a six-week leisure education program incorporating evidence-informed interventions, habit tracking, and sleep tracking to improve the quality of Sleep among older adults in supportive living. To date, 72% of Better Sleep participants have experienced an improvement in Sleep.


Mandy Wright, CTRS

Mandy is a CTRS and graduated from the U of L with a Bachelors in Therapeutic Recreation. Mandy has experience working in various healthcare settings, including long-term care, supportive living, acute care, and rehabilitation. A mix of personal experience, passion for program development and evidence-informed practice led Mandy to develop The Better Sleep Program.

PRESENTATION:
SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS IN OLDER ADULTS: INTEGRATING CLINICAL GUIDELINES FOR MEANINGFUL PRACTICE CHANGE WITH NICK UBELS AND LISA TINLEY

Social isolation and loneliness have emerged as key elements affecting the physical and mental well-being of older adults across Canada. CCSMH has developed clinical guidelines on social isolation and loneliness specific to older adults, primarily for health care and social service professionals to support them in their professional roles working with older adults. These Canadian clinical guidelines are the first in the world, including 17 recommendations for Prevention, Screening, Assessment and Interventions. This workshop will increase knowledge regarding the specific recommendations in the new clinical guidelines on social isolation and loneliness in older adults and explore practical ways to move the recommendations into meaningful practice change.




Nick Ubels, Health Promotion Coordinator, Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults Project

Nick Ubels (he/him) is a health promotion coordinator with the Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health (CCSMH), where he has worked since 2023. He holds a Master of Library and Information Studies degree from the University of British Columbia. Before coming to CCSMH, he worked in various settings, including journalism, public education, public libraries, and academic libraries. His most recent previous role was the three-year pilot position of community engagement librarian at the UBC Learning Exchange, where his work focused on making research concerning Vancouver's Downtown Eastside more accessible to those who live and work there. At CCSMH, his previous role included co-leading the development, promotion, and evaluation of the Behaviours in Dementia Toolkit, a free digital library of practical, inclusive, and evidence-informed resources for caregivers of people experiencing changes in mood or behaviour related to dementia. His areas of professional interest include community engagement, instruction, and knowledge mobilization for social good.


Lisa Tinley BA, Bachelor of Recreation Management and Community Development (University of Manitoba)

Lisa has spent most of her career passionately working with not-for-profit organizations and community groups to achieve impactful outcomes and believes deeply in the power of collaboration to bring about positive change. Recently, Lisa was the Outreach and Engagement Coordinator with CCSMH specifically on the project developing Clinical Guidelines on Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults. She helped create and implement the outreach and engagement strategy that included initiating and developing working relationships with stakeholders both nationally and provincially who were positioned to address social isolation and loneliness. She also helped promote a national survey for older adults and coordinated the logistics for the webinar to launch the SILOA guidelines.

Located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Lisa works directly with Age Friendly communities to reduce barriers for aging in place and is active on the board of Actively Aging Manitoba. Prior to her role with CCSMH, Lisa worked at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management as the Associate Director and worked to promote the faculty as well as build relationships within the community to enhance programs.

PRESENTATION:
SILVER LINING ADULT DAY PROGRAM: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY - THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ADULT DAY PROGRAM WITH NICOLE KULBA, SMILEY RANA AND KAYLEY MCCORMACK

The proposed adult program is designed to offer essential services and support for ageing adults in our community who choose to remain in their homes. During this session, we will outline the steps to develop, implement, and evaluate an Adult day Program through a 12-week pilot project. This program was created to offer respite for full-time caregivers who are caring for loved ones living with cognitive decline and experiencing social isolation. Its goal is to positively impact individuals' social, mental, physical, and emotional well-being in the Tofield and surrounding healthcare communities. The Silver Lining Adult Day Program has responded to the community's need for support by promoting social interaction and fostering connections among its members.


Nicole Kulba, Recreation Therapist

Nicole's professional journey in Therapeutic Recreation has been a testament to her unwavering dedication and continuous growth. From her beginnings on the East Coast to her current base in Alberta, she has left a significant mark in her field. Her commitment is evident through her active membership with ATRA and her decade-long service as a Recreation Therapist in Long-term care settings. She has honed her expertise by completing the required TR courses at Dalhousie University and obtaining her CTRS certification in 2013. Nicole's relentless pursuit of innovation and excellence was recognized with the ATRA 2019 Innovative Practice Award for her groundbreaking work with Ambient Technology - ABBY.

In 2024, Nicole expanded her impact by assuming the Provincial Professional Practice Lead - Continuing Care role, showcasing her leadership and dedication to advancing her field. Beyond her



professional endeavours, Nicole is a compassionate entrepreneur, owning and operating Paloma Seniors Care, a private practice that supports individuals with dementia who choose to age in place. Her passion for dementia care led her to become a Certified PAC consultant in 2020, further enhancing her ability to provide holistic support to her clients.

Nicole's interests reflect her zest for life. Her hobbies range from reading and hiking to learning golf and exploring new destinations with her family. Her multifaceted approach to life embodies a balance of professional achievement and personal fulfilment.



Smiley Rana, Recreation Therapy Intern Winter 2024

I, Smiley Rana, was born in India and migrated to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, 2015 for higher education. I graduated from the Therapeutic Recreation Diploma Program in 2017 from Norquest College and have worked in the recreation therapy field since then. I have mostly worked with residents living with dementia (memory care) in supportive/assisted living. In 2021, I had the opportunity to work as a Recreation Therapist for about ten months, which encouraged me and made me believe that I am capable of being a therapist and can positively impact people's lives. In 2022, I started a Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation (BTR) at the University of Lethbridge and will graduate with honours with distinction in May 2024. Currently, I am working at the Silver Lining Adult Day program, which was a part of my and another service project for our BTR practicum. I enjoy learning Punjabi cultural dancing, kickboxing, listening to music, cooking/baking, shopping, and socializing with family and friends in my leisure time. My life mantra is to bring smiles to people's faces and make them happy. My values are to be kind, caring, and compassionate.



Kayley McCormack, Recreation Therapy Intern Winter 2024

Born and Raised in the beautiful West Kootenays, Cranbrook, BC, I, Kayley, started my post-secondary journey through the College of the Rockies studying Kinesiology. I pursued this education to further my passion and knowledge in human health and physical activity, as living within the Kootenay offers various outdoor recreation opportunities within its breathtaking scenery. Growing up in this region, I lived for the outdoors, whether camping, hiking, biking, kayaking/paddle boarding, foraging, or sightseeing. Once I graduated from this program at the University of Lethbridge, I discovered the Therapeutic Recreation program and felt like this opportunity was my calling.

I am passionate about supporting people to be their best selves and live their most fulfilling, authentic lives by discovering and re-discovering their passions. Throughout my life, I have volunteered/worked in recreation in various settings, supporting vulnerable populations with multiple abilities, such as intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, stroke rehab, and dementia. Recreation brings out so many strengths and capabilities within each person, showing that no matter the disability a person is living with, they have so much to offer this world. Seeing first-hand the impact and benefits that recreation/leisure has on every population continues to fuel my admiration for Recreation Therapy. I look forward to continuing to positively impact the people's lives that I have the pleasure of being a part of.

PRESENTATION:

DESIRABLE LENGTH OF TIME FOR ENGAGING CLIENTS WITH MODERATE DEMENTIA IN PREFERRED THERAPEUTIC RECREATION INTERVENTIONS: A PILOT STUDY WITH RENA WALKER

This session will review the results of a pilot study aimed at determining the optimal length of time to engage clients with moderate dementia in preferred Therapeutic Recreation interventions. By elucidating the patterns of engagement within and between programs, this study may offer valuable insights to Recreation Therapy practitioners, enabling them to more adeptly address the requirements of this demographic.



Rena Walker, Instructor

Rena Walker is an Instructor and Practice Coordinator in the Therapeutic Recreation – Gerontology Diploma program at Lethbridge College. Rena began her career in Therapeutic Recreation as a student at Lethbridge College before completing an undergraduate degree in Disability Studies at the University of Calgary. Rena later completed a Master of Education Degree in Disability Studies from



the University of Calgary, focusing on the social support needs of adults with developmental families and their aging parents. Rena recently started her PhD in Education through the University of Saskatchewan. Rena has experience in Therapeutic Recreation in Long Term Care and Community Recreation. Rena has taught at Lethbridge College since 2003, and with a profound passion for teaching, Rena is dedicated to preparing the next wave of recreation therapy professionals. Her commitment to excellence is exemplified by her active pursuit of learning opportunities, her engagement in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research, and her recent involvement in applied research in therapeutic recreation. Beyond her professional pursuits, Rena enjoys spending quality time with her family. She has a strong sense of adventure and loves travelling. Additionally, Rena cherishes time spent on the family farm, connecting with nature and the land.

PRESENTATION:
PRACTICING COMPASSION, BUILDING RESILIENCE: THE UNEQUIVOCAL VALUE OF SEEING WORTH WITH TANNIS CHARTIER

Through the development of a Recreation program for Lethbridge's unhoused population, Tannis Chartier has seen the importance of compassion and dignity in the care of all individuals. The purpose of this session is to develop an understanding of the privilege that many practitioners have, establish some of the roots of addiction and homelessness, and develop a compassionate approach that serves as a catalyst for known worth and positive change with all individuals Therapeutic Recreation professionals encounter. This session includes lived experience.


Tannis Chartier, Therapy Assistant and Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation student

Tannis Chartier is a fourth-year Therapeutic Recreation student at the University of Lethbridge and a Therapy Assistant at a physical rehabilitation unit in Lethbridge. In her second year of studies, Tannis saw a need for meaningful leisure with Lethbridge's homeless population and began the program Resilient Rec. YQL. Through her work with this population, Tannis saw a gap in the care and treatment of those coming to healthcare facilities from adverse situations. With combined research and experience, Tannis developed a course on privilege, addiction, and practical care methods for her workplace. Tannis loves hiking, paddle boarding, and exploring coffee shops around southern Alberta when not engrossed in these endeavours.

PRESENTATION:
TAKING YOUR RESEARCH IDEAS TO THE NEXT LEVEL! WITH DEVAN MCNEILL AND TIFFANY MORIN

In this workshop, delegates will bring their research ideas and be prepared to advance their skills in moving their ideas to an action plan. We will review PICO, how to write a research proposal and funding suggestions. Get ready to be a game changer in moving TR forward with research. (Pre-symposium work required for this session)


Devan McNeill, Assistant Professor, CTRS

Devan completed his undergraduate in Inclusive and Therapeutic Recreation at Brock University. He became a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS). He worked as a Recreation Therapist for several years in mental health and addictions, acute care, day programs, and on a stroke unit. He completed his master's in Recreation and Leisure studies at the University of Waterloo. Devan previously taught at the Nova Scotia Community College in the Therapeutic Recreation diploma program before moving to Lethbridge. Devan is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Population Studies in Health program at the University of Lethbridge.


Tiffany Morin, Instructor, CTRS

Tiffany Morin (MSc, CTRS) has been working in therapeutic recreation for over 20 years, taking her across the globe. She has practiced in New Zealand, Australia, the USA, and Canada. Tiffany has a diploma in therapeutic recreation (gerontology) from Lethbridge College, a therapeutic recreation technician (TRT) certificate from Salt Lake Community College, a bachelor's degree in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (CRDS) from the University of Calgary, and a master's degree in Community Health Sciences from the University of Calgary. Tiffany has experience with various populations, but most recently, she worked in neurorehabilitation with Alberta Health Services in



Calgary, Alberta. This motivated her to partner with the Stroke Recovery Association of Calgary for her master's degree research project with young stroke survivors and their experiences with the local peer support program. You will now find her teaching in the Therapeutic Recreation degree program at the University of Lethbridge. In her free time, you will find Tiffany fully engaged in all sorts of leisure activities: hiking, camping, cooking, painting, beading, travelling, and volunteering for Ovarian Cancer Canada, Rocky Mountain Adaptive and folk music festivals.

PRESENTATION:
THERAPEUTIC RECREATION, NEURODIVERSITY, AND NEURO-AFFIRMING CARE WITH TOMMIAS KSIAZEK

What exactly is neuro-affirming care? And how can this tool enhance your therapeutic toolbox? Unlock the potential of neuro-affirming care in Therapeutic Recreation during this education session. Delve into neurodiversity and neuro-affirming care and discover how these principles intersect with strength-focused practice. Leave equipped with practical strategies to foster inclusive environments that honour the diverse strengths of all participants.


Tommias Ksiazek, Recreation Therapist and TR Instructor

Tommias Ksiazek is an experienced professional in the field of recreation therapy and a passionate advocate for neurodiversity. With 16 years of hands-on experience as a recreation therapist, Tommias has honed their expertise in understanding and supporting individuals with diverse needs. As a late-identified autistic individual themselves, they bring a unique perspective to their work as an instructor at NorQuest College, where they hope to inspire future generations of recreation therapy assistants and recreation therapists.

Tommias is dedicated to promoting neuro-affirming practices, emphasizing the importance of embracing differences and fostering inclusive environments, and hopes to share how neuro-affirming practices align within therapeutic recreation practice.

PRESENTATION:
YOUR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AS A RECREATION THERAPIST: GAME-CHANGING AS YOUR CAREER ADVANCES WITH BEV SUNTJENS, ATRA PRESIDENT

Remember your first (perhaps shaky) elevator speech in answer to the question, "What does a recreation therapist do?" From that moment forward, whether you have grown your career in a clinical practice, education, research, or leadership role, you've been forming your professional identity. Literature tells us that the concept of evolving professional identity in healthcare is complex and non-linear, and together, we will explore different aspects of this journey and connect it to ATRA's Competency Profile. This session will be informative and reflective as you plan for your career advancement in the incredible therapeutic recreation profession.


Bev Suntjens, ATRA President

Bev Suntjens has spent the past thirty-some years building a professional identity in therapeutic recreation – as a student, practitioner, educator, academic leader, and volunteer. As the founder of the Therapeutic Recreation program at NorQuest College, her greatest joy has been witnessing graduates make an impact on the development of the profession and in the lives of their clients. As a Vice Dean of Health Studies at NorQuest, Bev relies daily on her interdisciplinary collaboration skills and gives all credit to her foundation and passion as a Recreation Therapist. She is proud to serve as the current President of the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association and the Vice Chair of the Institute of Continuing Care Education and Research. Bev loves to laugh, write, and share ideas and dog pictures. She is passionate about storytelling (and listening!) and has twice published in the Chicken Soup for the Soul series. Bev lives in Stony Plain, Alberta and her greatest achievements to date remain the three young adults who call her 'Mom'.



ATRA AWARDS CEREMONY

ATRA has a robust Awards Program, chaired by the Vice President, and maintains a robust online archive of our award recipients since 1989. ATRA's Awards Committee currently has six enthusiastic volunteers from throughout Alberta whose main purpose is to celebrate excellence in the field of Therapeutic Recreation.

After presenting the Awards Ceremony last year virtually, the Awards Committee is preparing for this year's in-person ATRA Awards Ceremony in October 2024 during which we will celebrate our:

PROFESSIONAL AWARD WINNERS

5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 year ATRA Member Anniversaries

ATRA Members who have recently Retired

ATRA Volunteers

Professional Awards Categories:

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This individual has demonstrated commitment to excellence throughout the length of their career and has advanced the practice of Therapeutic Recreation.

PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

An individual who has made significant contributions to the field of Therapeutic Recreation in the past year.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE AWARD

An individual who has demonstrated innovative practice or new service in the field of Therapeutic Recreation.

OUTSTANDING PRECEPTOR AWARD

Preceptor in a clinical setting who demonstrates excellence in the provision of TR education in their workplace and values the importance of mentoring future professionals. Two awards will be given, one to a college and university-level preceptor.

OUTSTANDING STUDENT LEADER AWARD

A student who demonstrates leadership in school and externally, a promise of contribution to the field of Therapeutic Recreation. Two awards will be given, one to a college and university level student.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

A community organization or individual that has done something extraordinary to create inclusive opportunities for individuals in a community or has partnered with a TR professional to advance the field.

DIANNE BOWTELL TEAM AWARD (NEW IN 2024)

A team that has accomplished extraordinary outcomes and has created inclusive opportunities for their community. The team has made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the field of Therapeutic Recreation in Alberta.

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS QUICK FACT:

Professional Membership Award Nominations were open between

April 17, 2024 - May 25, 2024


We received 10x Professional Awards Nominations in 6x different award categories

The Awards Committee hopes that you will be able to join us either in-person or virtually and celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of our Award Winners who have gone above and beyond to advance the Therapeutic Recreation profession at the "Annual Awards Ceremony".

Do you have any questions or do you want to know how you can get involved? Feel free to contact me to learn more about the Awards Program!

Sincerely,

ATRA Vice President



Geralda Van Der Meijden

vicepresident@alberta-tr.ca



REGISTRATION

Registration will be completed through ATRA's Zoom Event platform for all delegates. An e-blast will be sent to all ATRA members and an update will be posted on ATRA's webpage with all registration links and details. All delegates will have the opportunity to earn up to 11.5 educational hours which is equivalent to 1.15 NCTRC eligible CEU's.

In-person registrants will have the opportunity to choose which breakout sessions they would like to attend across the 2 day event. Included in the cost of your registration will be the Morning Energizer session as well as breakfast, lunch and snacks across both days. In-person registrants will have the opportunity to meet and engage with our vendors in our vendors lounge as well as attend social events with other delegates and engage in plenty of networking opportunities throughout the Symposium!

Virtual registrants will be viewing all sessions held in our main plenary room, conference room 6, as noted on the agenda from the comfort of your own home. Virtual registrants will have access to the Zoom Events space to network with other virtual registrants.

IN PERSON ATTENDANCE RATES

EARLY BIRD PRICING (CLOSES AUGUST 31, 2024)

ATRA Professional Member - \$375
 ATRA Alumni Member - \$375
 ATRA Supporting Member - \$275
 ATRA Student Member - \$100
 Non-ATRA Member Professional Delegate - \$475
 Non-ATRA Member Student Delegate - \$150

REGULAR RATE PRICING (EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2024)

ATRA Professional Member - \$425
 ATRA Alumni Member - \$425
 ATRA Supporting Member - \$325
 ATRA Student Member - \$150
 Non-ATRA Member Professional Delegate - \$525
 Non-ATRA Member Student Delegate - \$200

VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE

EARLY BIRD PRICING (CLOSES AUGUST 31, 2024)

ATRA Professional Member - \$200
 ATRA Alumni Member - \$200
 ATRA Supporting Member - \$200
 ATRA Student Member - \$100
 ATRA Member Student Group Rate - \$350
 Non-ATRA Member Professional Delegate - \$250
 Non-ATRA Member Student Delegate - \$175
 Non-ATRA Member Student Group Rate - \$500

REGULAR RATE PRICING (EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2024)

ATRA Professional Member - \$250
 ATRA Alumni Member - \$250
 ATRA Supporting Member - \$250
 ATRA Student Member - \$150
 ATRA Member Student Group Rate - \$400
 Non-ATRA Member Professional Delegate - \$300
 Non-ATRA Member Student Delegate - \$200
 Non-ATRA Member Student Group Rate - \$550



MORNING ENERGIZER: DRUMS ALIVE

Drums Alive is an evidence-based fitness program that combines elements of traditional aerobic exercise with the rhythmic and therapeutic qualities of drumming. Participants use drumsticks to beat on exercise balls, which are placed in a stand, creating a dynamic and engaging workout. The program integrates movement, rhythm, and music to provide a full-body workout that is mentally stimulating to create a holistic fitness experience that promotes physical health, mental well-being, and social interaction. This is an all-levels and beginner workout.



Christina Start

Christina Start graduated from Lethbridge College in 2020 taking Therapeutic Recreation and Gerontology. She began working as a Health Care Aide and transitioned to roles facilitating programs for clients as an Assistant and Aide. During this time, Christina found a love for Drums Alive and the power of music in promoting overall well-being. Christina finished her certification to become a Drums Alive Instructor in 2021 and took Drums Alive Golden Beats in 2023. Christina is passionate about helping others see their true potential and providing Recreation and Leisure to promote healing and well-being. Christina enjoys yoga, nature walks, spending time with family and her puppy, helping the community, and mindfulness.



SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

ATRA would like to give a special thank you to the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA) for being a Diamond Sponsor of the 2024 ATRA Symposium.

DIAMOND MEMBER



Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association
Association Canadienne de Loisir Thérapeutique



SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

We want to thank all the Vendors and Sponsors who contributed to the success of the 2024 ATRA Symposium!



HOTEL AND CONTACT INFO



FANTASYLAND

FANTASYLAND HOTEL INFORMATION

17700 87 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB T5T 4V4

The room rate is \$179 per room plus taxes and tourism levy for the Superior 2 Queen rooms or \$229 per night plus taxes and tourism levy for an Executive King or 2 Queen room.

There are a limited number of rooms held under our rate so please book in a timely manner.

Kindly ensure guests are booking within the dates of October 23rd – 25th, 2024 to receive the group rate.

Online Reservations:

[Click here to make a reservation](#)

Phone Reservations:

Individual Reservations can be made by contacting our hotel Reservations Department directly at (780) 444-3000 or toll-free 1-800-737-3783. Callers MUST mention they are attending the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association or provide the group code# 6850247 to receive the negotiated rate.

All bookings by phone and online must be made by 11:59 p.m. on October 2nd, 2024.



ATRA WEBSITE

www.alberta-tr.ca

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#ATRA2024GameChangers

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