

RECREATION THERAPIST NATIONAL STANDARD OF PRACTICE

NOTE: All references herein to VA and VHA documents incorporate by reference subsequent VA and VHA documents on the same or similar subject matter.

1. Recreation Therapists systematically use recreation and therapeutic interventions for the specific purpose of improving the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual functioning of individuals; enhancing well-being; and enabling greater quality of life through recreation participation for individuals with injury, illness, or disability.

Recreation Therapists utilize treatment interventions, leisure education, and recreation experiences to improve functional outcomes, foster recovery, enhance health and wellness, promote the development of a healthy leisure lifestyle, and increase independence in activities of choice through activity modification, adaptation, and facilitation.

2. Recreation Therapists in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) possess the education and certification required by VA qualification standards. See VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, Part II, Appendix G60, dated June 7, 2019.

3. VA Recreation Therapists practice in accordance with the Standards of Practice for Recreational Therapy from the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA), available at: <https://www.atra-online.com/>. VA reviewed certification requirements for this occupation in December 2023 and confirmed that all Recreation Therapists in VA follow the ATRA standards.

4. Although VA only requires a certification, five states require a state license in order to practice as a Recreation Therapist in that state: New Hampshire, New Jersey (see note below), North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Utah.

Of those, one state exempts Federal employees from their state license requirements: Oklahoma.

VA reviewed state laws, state practice acts, and certification requirements for Recreation Therapists in December 2023 and did not identify any conflicts that impact practice of this profession in VA.

NOTE: Pursuant to New Jersey 45:8B-108, beginning on July 19, 2020, New Jersey must issue state licenses for Recreation Therapists practicing recreation therapy in New Jersey. As of December 20, 2023, New Jersey has not determined a date of issuance for recreation therapy licenses.

5. The Office of Recreation Therapy and Creative Arts Therapy Service is responsible for the content of this appendix. Questions about this national standard of practice may be referred to: VHARecreationTherapyFieldAdvisoryBoard@va.gov. This appendix is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of June 2029.