

CONTINUING EDUCATION IN

REC THERAPY

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW



DANNY W. PETTRY II
www.RecTherapyCEUs.com



RecTherapyCEUs
Helpful and Convenient to Use

This is an Educational Booklet Provided by
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Introduction

Dear friend,

I have written this guide to help you understand continuing education for Recreational Therapists.

You'll need to earn certification in the profession to make the most of the rewarding opportunities in our field.

Professionals with certification must continue their education to maintain their certification. This is also called earning Continuing Education Units (CEUs). A person who does not earn the minimum continuing education units will not be able to maintain their certification. A person would not want to lose that. Continuing Education Units will help you accomplish a number of different things.

In this book, you'll find what you need to know about the importance of certification and CEUs to your career choice. You'll also learn that it isn't hard to earn continuing education. Are you ready to learn? Then read on...

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Discovering Recreational Therapy

Volunteer work was required for any student in a degree program at the former Mountain State University in Beckley, West Virginia where I was a student. As a young 19-year-old, I didn't know what I wanted to do in life. My parents wanted me to be a nurse. My cousin Tracy, a physical therapist and her husband Adam, an occupational therapist invited me to complete my 40-hours of volunteer work with them at *HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital* in Huntington, West Virginia. I had recently had a break-up and was feeling slightly depressed, so I agreed to go with my relatives for a week and complete my volunteer work.

People at the rehabilitation hospital were in pain. They were suffering from strokes and other accidents. I found it hard to dwell in self-pity and depression while I was volunteering to help people in need. The experience was a real eye-opener for me.

I followed physical therapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and other professionals around for the first day.

On the second day, I heard laughter coming from a back room. I felt curious and

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decided to go check things out. That is when I met the recreational therapists, Mark and Marci, who were helping people! I knew in an instant that I had to get involved. As a volunteer, I spent the rest of the 40-hour week with them. My volunteer duties consisted of transporting patients in wheelchairs to and from group sessions, grabbing a coffee for a patient, or other tasks needed. I helped serve at the 4th of July cookout that week.

The recreational therapists provided a well-balance mix of interventions to assist with maintaining and building social connectedness, cognitive functioning, emotional well-being, physical functioning, and overall quality of life. They had an outdoor gardening area that was accessible and people in wheelchairs. They had the 4th of July cookout in that area, which families could attend and participate. The recreational therapists also provided educational trainings on various topics. These sessions also included relaxation training. Some activity interventions were purposely designed to help people use cognitive functioning (to recall names and places) or to increase use of skills with non-dominant arm (after loss of ability in dominate arm from stroke). From the outside it could appear that patients were just painting a picture

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or building a birdhouse, but they were doing so much more through recreational therapy.

I found my passion and purpose that week. I decided I wanted to be a recreational therapist! I transferred to Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia because they had a degree program with a focus in Therapeutic Recreation. Higher education empowered me to essentially choose my career in life instead of having a job choose me. I completed my undergraduate degree from Marshall University in August 2002. I had a job interview the very first day after my internship, at a local psychiatric hospital. They hired me as a recreational therapist. Twelve years later (as of 2014), I am still working at this same hospital because I love what I do.

I took and passed the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) exam in 2003 at the earliest time possible. I was very worried about taking the exam, but I passed and have held Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credentials since then.

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Three types of credentials

Recreational Therapists often have various types of credentials. Here are the three most popular types:

- **Licensed:** This is a credential that a person must have by law in order to practice in a given state. The purpose of licensure is to protect the public from people who are not qualified to provide services. Several states require Recreational Therapists to have a license to practice. Some states that require a Recreational Therapist to have a license to practice include: New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Utah. There are several other states that are working towards requiring recreational therapists to be licensed.
- **Registered:** This is often a list of people who are allowed/ granted permission to practice in a given state. Several states require Recreational Therapists to be registered to practice, including: California and Washington.

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- **Certified:** This is a voluntary process that an individual can take to demonstrate she (or he) has met certain requirements in a profession. The “CTRS” is often considered the benchmark for meeting minimum standards as a recreational therapist. The National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification has several specialty certifications that recreational therapists can earn to demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills. These specialty certifications include: physical medicine/ rehabilitation, geriatrics, developmental disabilities, behavioral health, and community inclusion services.

Recreational Therapists must continue their education and training in order to maintain their credentials.

It is best to contact your licensing board, registration board, or certification board to see what types of continuing education is required and accepted.

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Why is Continuing Education Important?

Some States Require It

You may live in a state that requires license by law. You should know that there are six states that require licensure or registration to practice (at the time this guide was printed). Other states are in the process of seeking licensure for recreational therapy professionals to protect the public.

If you live in one of these six states, then you cannot practice recreational therapy without licensure, registration, or certification.

On the next page, you'll find details about these six states:

- New Hampshire requires licensure.

Individuals will need to apply to state boards and pass a competency exam before they are allowed to practice recreational therapy.

Learn more at the Office of Licensed and Allied Health Professionals,
www.nh.gov/alliedhealth/

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- North Carolina requires licensure.

Individuals will need to pass a Board Review that requires proof of exam passage, the required education, and internship in order to become licensed with the state board as a professional recreational therapist.

Learn more at the North Carolina Board of Recreational Therapy Licensure, www.ncbrtl.org

- Oklahoma requires licensure.

Individuals will need to apply with the state to become board certified. They must show their competency in the field.

Learn more at the Oklahoma Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision, <http://www.okmedicalboard.org/>

- Utah requires board certification, licensure, and registration with the state board. Individuals must pass a competency exam before they can be registered as a practicing recreational therapist.

Learn more at the Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensure, <http://www.dopl.utah.gov/>

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Washington: Individuals must register with the state of Washington to legally practice as a recreational therapist.

Learn more at the Washington State Therapeutic Recreation Association, <http://www.wstra.org/registration.html>

- California: Individuals must pass a competency exam and receive certification from the state before they may practice as a recreational therapist. Learn more at the California Board of Recreation and Park Certification, http://www.cbrpc.org/Certification_U4X3.html

If you live in any of these states, you will need the proper certification or registration before you are allowed to legally practice as a recreational therapist. Even if you don't live in one of the states named, there are other very good reasons for getting certified.

Employers Prefer It

While the state you live in may not require licensure or certification for RTs, that doesn't mean employers won't look for it. In fact, in today's competitive world, anything that will give you a step above the competition will help you immensely. In other words, pursuing

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certification, licensure, and CEUs will be the best way to go after the job you want. If you are able to put these extra credentials on your resume, then you can:

- Pursue more preferable jobs with top rated employers;
- Expect higher pay from any recreational therapy job, and
- Have more opportunities for growth and promotion in your current job.

Even if you aren't required to get certification as a recreational therapist, it is still a good idea because it can open many more career paths for you.

Keep Up with Current Therapy Methods

Of course, by taking CEU credits, you will be able to keep up with current therapy methods. Because things are evolving regularly, you could get left behind very quickly; leaving you using outdated methods, and that could mean lesser effectiveness. By taking continuing education courses, you will be aware of the changing world of recreational therapy so that you can continue to be a top professional in your field.

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Advancement in Career Level

You can also advance in your career by taking CEUs. You will find that more opportunities open for you at your current job and you will have other career opportunities as well.

- **Specialized Education = More Job Opportunities**
By taking specialized CEU courses, you will be able to pursue more job opportunities. Because you will have education in specific fields (working with troubled youths for example), you won't be limited in where you can work.
- **More Responsibilities**
By pursuing CEUs in your current job and presenting your education to employers, you may find yourself with more responsibilities. When you can offer more specialized therapy, your employer will give you more opportunities.
- **Higher Pay**
Of course, one of the advantages to obtaining regular CEUs, you will be able to pursue higher paying positions either in your current job or in other career opportunities. Often, employers will be willing to pay more for more education.

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As you can see, there are definitely good reasons to pursue CEUs in one of the different options available for continuing education. If you are required to obtain continuing education credits, then you do need to follow the rules set forth by your state or organization.

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Where Can You Earn Continuing Education Units?

You can choose from numerous different options for CEUs, depending on your location, your schedule, and other factors in your life. Consider each of the following:

- **Professional Associations:**

The American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) is my (Danny Pettry) personal choice for continuing education. They offer:

- Annual conferences at a national level. These conferences are offered in different cities each year. They are usually in different parts of the country. I enjoy networking with professionals at these conferences.
- Mid-year conferences at a national level
- Local/ states branches of ATRA offer conferences and trainings.
- Webinars are also provided. There are various topics that a person can complete from home or work.

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- **Online**

Online classes have become more popular in the last few years because they are so flexible. When you choose online CEUs, you can sign up for classes at your own convenience, study at times that work for you, and get your educational credits without having to change your schedule. There are many places online that offer trainings. I have developed an online program that focuses on therapeutic recreation knowledge areas. You can view my self-study CEU course library at this link:

www.dannypetry.com/courses.htm

- **Classwork**

You could also take classes at your local school or technical college. These programs will likely cost more money and you will need to change your own schedule to pursue them. However, if you plan on furthering your degree, or obtaining another degree, or an advanced degree then you may be able to use any classes you take toward your needed credit hours. You might want to consider taking a graduate course in recreational therapy. One course could satisfy a large portion of your required continuing education.

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- **Audio/Teleconference**
Audio/Teleconference programs allow you to pursue your CEUs from home. You may need to attend scheduled meetings over the phone or online.
- **Agency Education**
Certain agencies will offer opportunities for CEUs, and if you work for one of the agencies, then you may not even need to pay for them. If you are already working in the career path, then you do have the option to check with your employer and determine if there are CEU options available.
- **Conferences**
Recreational therapists can attend and participate in trainings offered by other professional associations. Again, it is best to check with your credentialing board to see what types of continuing education is approved and accepted.

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The Biggest Mistake to Avoid

It is important to maintain your certification once you have earned it. It would be a big mistake to allow it to expire. There could be consequences for doing so. Employers may give disciplinary actions that could include termination if the certificate is required. Some employers may reduce an employee's salary if they earn more for having advanced certificates. Continuing to use a certificate/ credentials when they have expired is fraudulent and could result in serious legal consequences. Avoid all of this by maintaining your professional certificates.

Personal Disclaimer

I (Danny Pettry) will never know everything there is about the recreational therapy profession. Some of the knowledge and skills I gained from my 2002 degree in the field has been outdated. There are newer concepts and trends in the field. That is one important reason for maintaining certification because it requires you to keep current on education.

There are several specialty areas in our field. The National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification has five specialty certificates for advanced practitioners. These include: physical medication/ rehabilitation, geriatrics, developmental disabilities, behavioral health,

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and community inclusion services. Of course, there are other specialty areas in the field as well. In example, I provide services for pediatrics and adolescents. So, naturally, I have taken time to take continuing education courses in child development to enhance my knowledge in providing services for that area.

I have a passion for learning and continuing education. I find recreational therapy fascinating and I want to learn everything I can (in several areas) in order to be the most knowledgeable practitioner that I can.

Some things I do to learn more:

- I read newer revised editions of Dr. David Austin's books.
- I read the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) newsletters and news bulletins.
- I follow Charlie Dixon's Therapeutic Recreation Directory newsletter and website.
- I read articles for professional journals.
- If an interesting book is released, I read it and take notes on how I can apply the lessons to my practice.

Again, I want to give my disclaimer that I do not know everything about the profession. I do want to learn more.

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The Extra Mile

My Biggest Tip: Get More than Needed

Going the extra mile is a saying that I often heard to describe teachers who do a great job. As an elementary school student (with concrete thinking), I thought this meant the teacher would take the long to school. (Laugh aloud now, that was for your humor). As an adult (with more abstract thinking), I understand the concept of the extra mile a little better. Sure, a person can stop at the finish line. They can do the bare minimum needed to get by. Sometimes, people have been known to even stop short of the finish line. That isn't the kind of person that I want to be. I want to strive to be the best that I can be.

Action Step

Go the extra mile with continuing your education. Take more than the bare minimum continuing education credit. Learn all that you can. Read professional newsletters and journals. Read updated text books in the profession. Attend professional conferences in your specialty area (in example: pediatrics, behavioral health, physical rehabilitation).

Be the best you can be. Don't settle for mediocre.

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Danny Pettry's Guarantee



Select a self-study continuing education course that you're interested in taking.

www.DannyPettry.com

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Thank You

Dear reader:

Thank you for choosing to read my book on continuing education. I also want to thank you for exploring my web-site, DannyPettry.com and my *Rec. Therapy Today* email newsletter. I'm empathetic to understanding that reading takes time, attention, and sometimes quietness. I am grateful that you've taken time to read my book.

Recreational therapy is a passion of mine. I love the profession as you probably already know. I want to learn everything I can about helping people to heal through recreation interventions.

I invite you to visit my web-site to take a self-study continuing education course at your leisure. I hope you will continue your education as well as reading for pleasure.

Sincerely, your friend,



Danny W. Pettry, II

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Works Cited

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**Discover why 1,000's of Rec. Therapists are
using DannyPettry.Com: Rec Therapy CEUs
for their Continuing Education Needs**

Recreational therapists from nearly every state in the U.S. have taken self-study CEU courses from Danny Pettry, including people from the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Internationally, people from Australia, New Zealand, England, and Canada have taken courses. One Recreational Therapist from the U.S. lived in Germany with her husband who was stationed there in the military. She completed self-study courses through this program to maintain her continuing education requirements at a distance.

Thanks for your help! The self-study courses were great. What a fantastic way to get CEUs! Thank you!

- Ash Carrel, Bolivar, MO

By the way...thanks for offering this option for CEUs. I have an overabundance of CEUs for my NCTRC, but in NH you can only have a limited number each yr. in seminars, etc. for licensure, so this helped me fulfill the other category. The books were very good too!- **Gisela, New Hampshire**

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The courses are great! You can do them on your own time and there's no travel.

They are perfect for the busy professional.

**- Sadie Wermers, Rec Therapist,
Minnesota**

Educational and user friendly. Great service.

**- Melissa Princivalli, Rec Therapist,
South Carolina**

These courses are truly convenient and are helpful in the process of obtaining CEUs. It's nice to have options in topics and enough time to finish the course.

I'm an advocate of these home study courses!

**- Dorothy De Los Reyes, Rec Therapist,
New Jersey**

I am so excited to have found Danny's website. It has helped me get the CEU hours I needed at an affordable price. The course was easy to follow and Danny provided excellent instruction. Not to mention, I just had a baby and it allowed me to work on my son's schedule.

- Adrienne Manhart, Rec Therapist, Texas

I liked the reading material given and the way the questions were asked.

**- Allen Kimberlin, Rec Therapist, State of
Washington.**

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I think this is a wonderful way for those isolated in "Recreation Therapy" to keep informed and up to date in the field. Thank you.

- Margaret M. Arlt, Rec Therapist, Delaware

I will make this quick statement about my experience with these home study courses. When I found out about DannyPettry.Com's website I got really excited that recreational therapists have a site they can easily access to get continuing education credits. The home study course I took was easy, fast, and very informative. I personally think that in our very, very, busy schedules we need opportunities just like what Danny offers. Thank you for doing this, and I will definitely add this site to my favorites and recommend it to my colleagues!

- Gisel Prado, Rec Therapist, Florida

This is fabulous for busy professionals who need CEUs.

- Nicole Grego, Rec Therapist, Pennsylvania

You [Danny Pettry] make the CEU process much less of a headache! I will definitely promote your program to my friends.

- Jean Santo, Rec Therapist, California

I just read and took the test..Great info! Thanks for doing this!!! Loved that I can do this at my leisure and in my own home! Thanks Danny.

- Lisa Contreni, Rec Therapist, New York

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Hi Danny- I have taken a few of your classes and love it. They are convenient and excellent sources of knowledge for a working Mom.

- Jodi Danback, Rec Therapist, South Carolina

Courses are affordable with easy access!

- Jill Pelaez, Rec Therapist, Maryland

I can read the course material on my own time. It fits into my schedule and is a cost efficient way to gain knowledge & CEUs

- Bethany Ussery, Rec Therapist, Missouri

It is easy to follow and interesting to learn.

- Deana Treadway, Rec Therapist, Knoxville, Tennessee

The course was quick and had a good format. It is great and needs no improvement.

- Melissa Lewis, Rec Therapist, North Carolina

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Disclaimer

I, Danny Pettry have taken every effort to put together this Special Report to be accurate and informative.

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Helpful Resources and Links

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Below is a list of resources you can use for certification, continuing education, and other information you may need as a recreational therapist.

The National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC)

www.nctrc.org, 845-639-1471

American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA)

www.atra-online.com, 601-582-3354

Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association (CTRA)

<http://www.canadian-tr.org>

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

<http://www.caahep.org>, 727-210-2350

TR Therapeutic Recreation Directory

<http://www.recreationtherapy.com/>,

IU Scholar Works – Recreational Therapy Video Series

<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/handle/2022/3378>

Danny Pettry’s Self-Study CEU Program

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