

Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism

Recreation Therapy



Recreation Therapy is one of three concentrations in the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism at Radford University. Upon successful completion of the program, students can find employment in municipal parks and recreation systems, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, prisons, youth organizations, nursing homes, psychiatric facilities, camps, and non-profit agencies.

Recreation therapy is the use of recreational services to improve or maintain physical, mental, emotional, and/or social functioning to assist individuals in expressing independent leisure lifestyles. Comprehensive recreation therapy services involve a continuum of care including: treatment that uses activities to remediate or rehabilitate functional abilities and to assist in diagnosis; leisure education that uses activities to acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes that facilitate an independent lifestyle and avocational competence; and recreation that uses activities to enhance health, growth, development, and independence through intrinsically rewarding leisure behavior. Within their courses, students use a wide range of assessment and screening tools, personalize individual treatment plans, provide leisure education programs, and facilitate community integration/reintegration programs.

The National Recreation and Park Association accredits the recreation therapy concentration as well as core degree requirements. Students will be eligible to take the national examination for a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) upon graduation. This certification is the most professional advanced credential for the field of recreation therapy. Recreation specialists often work as part of an interdisciplinary team including physicians, nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, and speech language pathologists.

A state-of-the-art recreation therapy laboratory serves as a setting for clinical recreation therapy practice for students and practitioners. Some of the outreach services offered include: an adventure therapy ropes program for brain injury survivors and caregivers; various social skill development groups using creative arts and games; an inclusive preschool program that teaches preschool-aged children with and without disabilities to work together; and RU Outdoor Accessible Recreation. Over 2,000 hours of client services are provided annually as part of the laboratory.

Students may also become involved in RU Gone Fishin'!, a program designed to help people connect or reconnect with recreational fishing and friends, family, neighbors, and communities. These connections come about by sharing experiences, stories, and sometimes lies about the big one that got away. RU Gone Fishin'! helps this happen by providing training, support, and resources to anyone who would like to participate in this fun and challenging activity.

For more information contact:
Dr. Jim Newman
Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism
Radford University, P.O. Box 6963
Radford, VA 24142
(540) 831-7720
jnewman19@radford.edu

