



NOVA SCOTIA  
**THERAPEUTIC RECREATION**  
ASSOCIATION

# **Advocating for Recreation Therapy Services**

## **A How To Guide & Workbook**

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## **Nova Scotia Therapeutic Recreation Association**

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# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide you with a step-by-step guide for advocating for Recreation Therapy (RT) services within your service setting. It includes lined areas where you can start compiling your thoughts for things you might want to include. While completing your proposal will provide a sound argument for services, there is never a guarantee that its presentation will result in the addition of allocated funds or services. It will, at the very least, raise the profile and importance of your role and the information can potentially be referenced in grant writing, among other things.

A helpful tip before we get started:

In any setting, there is a chain of command. It typically begins with your supervisor or manager and progresses through senior leadership. While cc'ing everyone is not recommended, do not be afraid to cc your supervisor or manager's next direct superior. In most cases, those in positions of leadership greatly value staff who take initiative in striving to improve the services of which they oversee. It should also be considered that those within management positions often immediately think of their budget for services and can be hesitant to entertain any idea of something that would result in further strain. With that being said, you will speak to these areas within your proposal so it is important that you do not take no for an answer. Ask politely and respectfully for a designated meeting time for you to review your proposal. At this point, hopefully all of the information you have included will make your case.

Okay, let's do this!

*\*Disclaimer: This document provides a guide for writing a proposal for additional Recreation Therapy services. It is up to the individual to include information they feel is relevant and this document may not cover all areas. Use your experience and discretion to adapt this document as required.*



# Step 1: Notice of Confidentiality

A confidentiality notice is something you should consider including as you may reference direct examples and experiences within your service setting, which could be considered confidential. A confidentiality notice also serves as a reminder to never include confidential patient information.

For example: This document, together with any attachments, is intended exclusively for its recipient(s) as it contains information that could be considered confidential. This document has been prepared for the following individuals:

Jane Doe, Manager, Identified Service Area

Janet Flow, Director, Identified Service Area

**Who are the people you will be sending your completed document to for review?**

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*Step 3.3: Outline Your Concerns/Gaps/Improvements with Research*

In this section, you will outline (and reference properly) what the research says about each one of your specific concerns and population.

For example: “For Inpatient Mental Health and Addictions specifically, research shows RT services support mood regulation and symptom reduction, reduction in the use of pro re nata (PRN) medication, seclusion and restraints, and supports community reintegration and placement readiness, among other areas.” Identify your specific talking points and find credible sources to support them. The RT Wise Owls website has a database of literature for a variety of populations. <http://sites.temple.edu/rtwiseowls/>.

**Concern 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Concern 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Concern 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Step 8: Acknowledgements

Our managers and their leadership are busy people. Take a moment to thank them for taking the time to review your document and listen to your presentation. You can also reference your experience working for your agency and how you are excited to be part of an organization that is striving to transform the lives of your population.

**Who will you be thanking? What did you appreciate?**

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Once you have completed the acknowledgements section, the only other section to include is your references. With that being said, additional sections that you may want to consider including could be:

1. Interdisciplinary team – How will the new position work with and support the interdisciplinary team and the individuals overall care plan? Provide specific examples of how you work with Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Physicians, etc.
2. Recommendations for staffing compliments – Is there literature that supports a specific staffing compliment for your setting or population?
3. Other service areas – Will the new position or its responsibilities support other service areas or the transfer of care?
4. Team support – Are others within your interdisciplinary team in support of the new position? Would they be willing to put this in writing?

Some final tips to remember prior to submitting your proposal include:

1. Grammar, spelling and formatting – Review, review, review your document and ensure you are utilizing the same formatting (i.e., APA) throughout.
2. Person-first language – We need to lead by example and advocate for the abilities of the people we serve.
3. Overall language – People often get confused by what it is we do as Recreation Therapy professionals. Consistent language is key and it is imperative that you connect with the Nova Scotia Therapeutic Recreation Association to ensure we are all sharing the same message!
4. Consult others – People are willing to help! Whether it is statistic information, providing a reference of support for the position, or reaching out to another RT who works in a similar agency.
5. Feedback – If there is someone appropriate who is open to providing feedback on your proposal? If so, utilize them, however, ensure confidentiality is maintained.