



ATRA Scope of Practice



Brent Wolfe PhD, LRT, CTRS, FDRT;

Allie Thomas PhD, CTRS;

Kaitlin Mueller PhD, LRT, CTRS;

Derek Whaley PhD, LRT, CTRS;

Monica Martinez MS, CTRS



Learning Objectives

Understand the purpose of the Scope of Practice (ScOP)

1. Describe 1 justification for creating this scope of practice, including current limitations and the need for modernization considering evolving professional roles and service settings.
2. Identify 2 comprehensive sources and stakeholder engagement process used to inform the development of the revised (ScOP), including national and international documents, certification standards, licensure laws, and accreditation guidelines.
3. Discuss 2 applications of the proposed components of the updated ScOP and explain how they will impact professional identity, education, licensure, and interdisciplinary collaboration within the profession of recreational therapy.



National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification®

Protecting and Promoting Since 1981

NCTRC Scope of Practice for the Practice of Recreation Therapy

The primary purpose of recreation therapy practice is to improve health and quality of life by reducing impairments of body function and structure, reducing activity limitations, participation restrictions, and environmental barriers of the clients served. The ultimate goal of recreation therapy is to facilitate full and optimal involvement in community life. The scope of recreation therapy practice includes all patient/client services of assessments, planning, design, implementation, evaluation and documentation of specific therapeutic interventions, management, consultation, research, and education, for either individuals or groups that require specific therapeutic recreation or recreation therapy intervention. This scope of practice represents, at a minimum, the process and knowledge base delineated in the most recent National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) Job Analysis Study (Job Tasks and Knowledge Areas for the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist) and delivered by a CTRS consistent with professional standards of practice, and codes of ethics with the intent of enhancing consumer safety.

(Developed via State Recognition Project and accepted by the Boards of Directors of ATRA, NTRS, and NCTRC, 2004)



Scope of Practice and Standards of Practice

Scope of Practice

The **scope of practice** refers to the **legal and professional boundaries** of what a **recreational therapist** is **qualified, trained, and permitted** to do.

Standards of Practice

The **standards of practice** outline the **expected level of quality and professionalism** in how recreational therapy services should be **delivered**.





Differences

Scope of Practice

Key Points:

- Defines the **range of services** that recreational therapists can legally provide.
- Based on **education, training, licensure, and certification**.
- Dictated by **state laws, regulatory boards, and professional organizations**.

Standards of Practice

Key Points:

- Provide **guidelines** for ethical, effective, and professional practice.
 - Ensure **consistency, safety, and accountability** in client care.
- 



Differences

Scope of Practice

Think of it as:

What a recreational therapist is allowed and prepared to do professionally.

Standards of Practice

Think of it as:

How recreational therapy should be practiced to maintain professionalism and quality care.





Aspect

Scope of Practice

Standards of Practice

Focus	→	What therapists can do	How therapists should do it
Based on	→	Laws, certification, and training	Professional guidelines and ethical codes
Purpose	→	Define professional boundaries	Ensure quality and consistency of care
Enforced by	→	Legal/regulatory bodies	Professional organizations (like ATRA)





Purpose of the ATRA ScOP

To establish professional boundaries in recreational therapy.

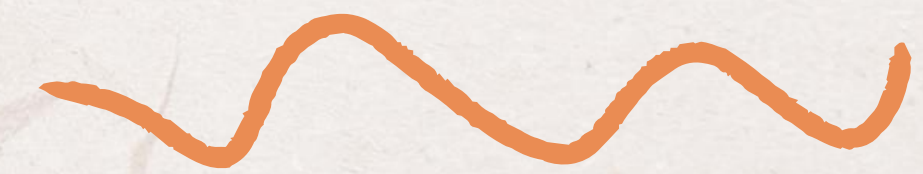
To ensure consistency and clarity across the profession.

To provide guidance for regulatory and accreditation purposes.

To educate and advocate stakeholders for services.

To protect public by ensuring qualified professionals perform specific tasks.

Maintain professional standards by defining boundaries for practice.





The Development Process

Multi-phased approach
(Phases I-IV)



Phase I

- Commissioned by the ATRA BOD
- Review and analyze RT foundational documents and provide a scoping review of all documents (ScOP Taskforce)
- Review and analyze related scopes of practice
- Send analysis of documents to ScOP sub-taskforce for independent review and feedback
- Taskforce analyzed all feedback and made changes/edits as necessary to the documents



Our Amazing Sub-taskforce

Chelsea Farrington - California

Jeff Dick - Alaska

Meg Frisco - Colorado

Jessica Burke - Texas

Allie Pensyl - Indiana

Summer Matics - Virginia

Thea Kavanaugh - New Mexico

Rita Penniman - Washington D.C.

Erin Dixon - National





Review of Existing RT Literature and Documentation

Review Existing Standards & Literature in RT:

American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) and the *National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC)*

Definitions from these organizations

ATRA definition

NCTRC Definition

Review state or regional licensure requirements.

Definitions of RT from licensure documents

Oklahoma

New Hampshire

North Carolina

[https://www.ncbrtl.org/downloads/Law and Rules/Chapter 90C1.pdf](https://www.ncbrtl.org/downloads/Law%20and%20Rules/Chapter%2090C1.pdf)

[https://www.ncbrtl.org/downloads/Law and Rules/21%20NCAC%2065%20All%20Rules%202022.docx](https://www.ncbrtl.org/downloads/Law%20and%20Rules/21%20NCAC%2065%20All%20Rules%202022.docx)

Utah

New Jersey

Washington D.C. p14 definition District of Columbia Municipal Regulations for RT

Definitions of RT from Medicaid waiver documents

Texas

Indiana

Utah

Michigan





Review of Existing RT Literature and Documentation

Review Existing Standards & Literature in RT:

Literature:

NCTRC Scope of Practice (circa 2004)

NCTRC Job Task Analysis (2021)

Delphi Studies

RT Competencies, Part I

RT Competencies, Part II

Accreditation

CAAHEP-CARTE Standards & Guidelines

COAPRT documents

Australian Scope of Practice

Standards of Practice

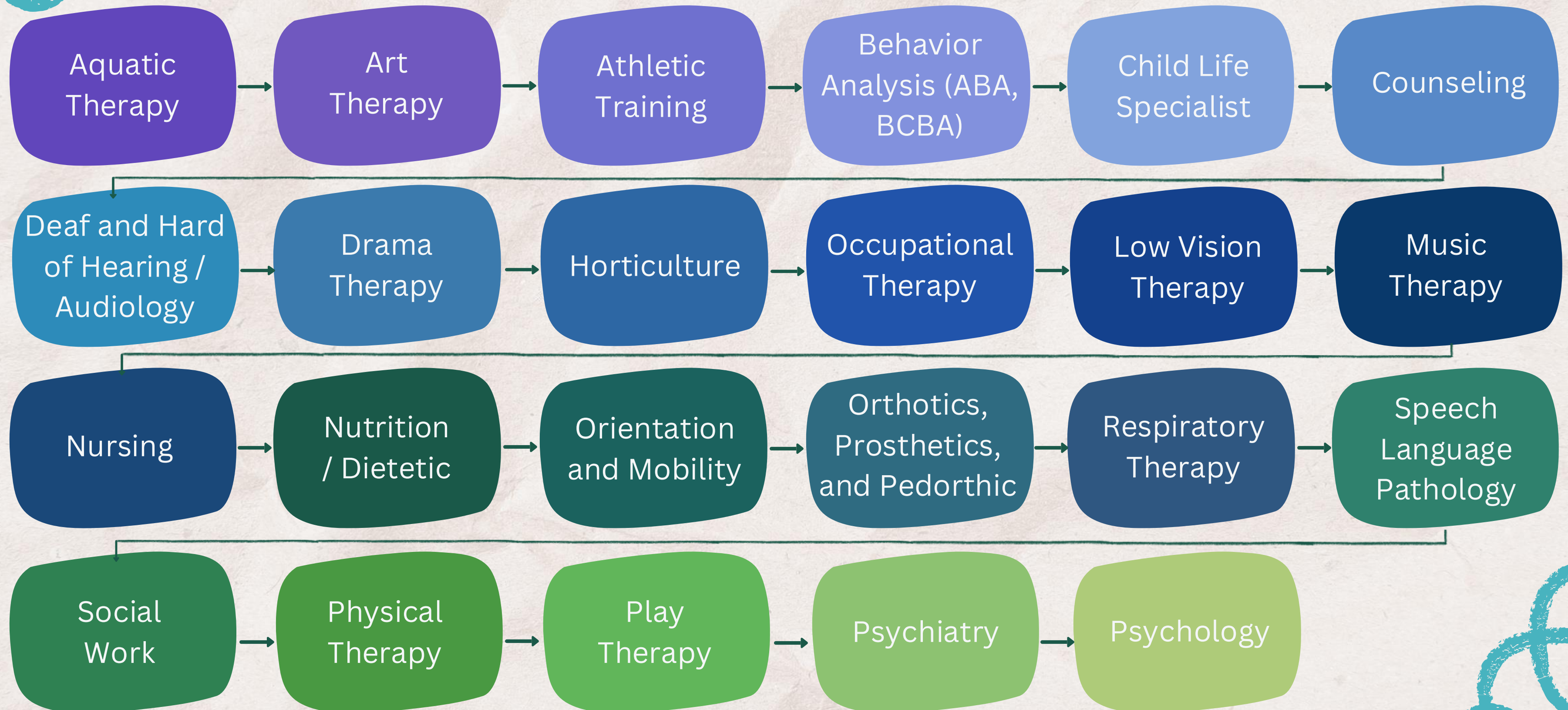
ATRA Standards of Practice of RT

VA National Standards of Practice

2023 Canadian Standards of Practice



Related Scopes of Practice



Phase II

- Identify key components/elements that will go into the Scope of Practice
 - Solicited input from sub-taskforce



Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession – ATRA Definition “Recreational therapy is a systematic process that utilizes recreation and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions as a means to psychological and physical health, recovery, and well-being.”

Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

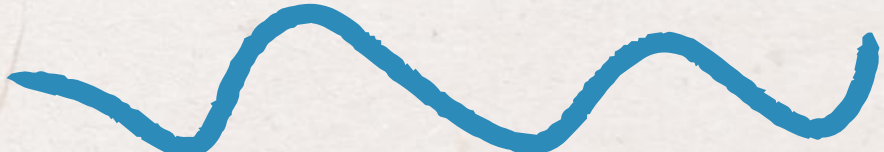
Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice



Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession

Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies
Domains of Practice
Services Provided
Population Served
Practice Settings
Ethical Standards
Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Key Elements to the ScOP (outline)

Definition of the Profession
Education

Certification and Licensure

Core Competencies

Domains of Practice

Services Provided

Population Served

Practice Settings

Ethical Standards

Boundaries of Practice

Phase III (current phase)

- Collaborate with Stakeholders
- Engage input from:
 - Professional organizations (e.g., ATRA or NCTRC).
 - ATRA conference attendees.
 - Experienced recreational therapists.
 - Employers and regulatory agencies.
 - Allied health professionals for interprofessional alignment.
 - Licensure representatives.
 - ATRA chapters.

Phase IV

Write the Document

- Use clear, concise language.
- Make it easily accessible for a diverse audience (e.g., professionals, policymakers, clients, caregivers).

Review and Revise

- Share the draft with stakeholders for feedback.
- Ensure the document aligns with professional standards and legal requirements.

Finalize and Disseminate

- Publish the scope of practice in relevant professional forums, websites, and regulatory boards.
- Train practitioners and stakeholders on its implementation and use.



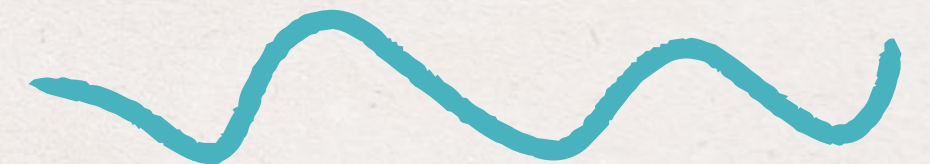
We want your feedback!

ATRA conference attendee feedback time!





Q&A Session



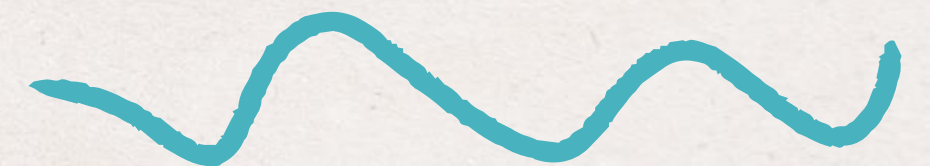


**For more
information contact:**



Allie Thomas

kc37@txstate.edu





Thank You

