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About the Authors...

NORMA J. STUMBO received her B.S. and M.S. in Recreation and Park Administration/Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Missouri-Columbia and her Ph.D. in Leisure Studies/Therapeutic Recreation from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is currently a professor of therapeutic recreation at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. Dr. Stumbo served on the Board of Directors of the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification from 1981 to 1989, serving as Chair of the Test Management Committee from 1982 to 1989 and Vice President from 1988 to 1989. She has authored over 200 publications and conducted over 400 presentations at the local, state, and national levels, on a variety of topics, including entry-level knowledge, curriculum, assessment, evaluation, and leisure education.

JEAN E. FOLKERTH received her B.S. in Camping and Outdoor Education/Therapeutic Recreation from Indiana University, her M.A. in Therapeutic Recreation from Michigan State University, and her Re.D. in Recreation Administration/Therapeutic Recreation from Indiana University. She is currently an associate professor and director of the Recreation Therapy Program at the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio. Dr. Folkert served on the Board of Directors of the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification from 1984 to 1989, serving as president from 1985 to 1987. She served on the Board of Directors of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society from 1979 to 1982 and was instrumental in the implementation of the State and Regional Advisory Council for NTRS. Currently, Dr. Folkert is co-chair of the Alliance Taskforce on Higher Education representing the American Therapeutic Recreation Association. Dr. Folkert has authored several publications and conducted over 100 presentations at state, regional, and national levels on topics including credentialing, professional preparation, and professional issues.
Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge several individuals who have helped with this publication. First, we would like to thank Dr. Marcia J. Carter from the University of Northern Colorado. We benefit greatly from her expertise.

We also owe thanks to the many individuals who used the second edition and let us know what they thought about it. Their comments have helped to improve the third edition. We hope the audience of the third edition feels equally free to share their advice about the Study Guide.

Our students have also helped us clarify ideas and questions, with ideas and questions of their own. We appreciate their comments on draft versions, as well as on individual items. In addition, their patience with our absences from campus to hide away and write are appreciated. May you all achieve above the cut scores!

We also appreciate the support of our families and partners.

The staff at Sagamore Publishing has been exceptional. We appreciate the support and enthusiasm of their efforts.
Welcome to the third edition of the Study Guide for the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist Certification Examination! We are excited to tell you that the third edition (2005) has changed significantly from the second edition (1997) and the first edition (1990).

The third edition has 90 warm-up items—40 more than the second edition, and two practice tests—instead of just one. Like the second edition, there are 240 diagnostic and review items that focus on specific areas, if you have trouble with the two practice tests.

As always, the absolute best information about the NCTRC exam comes from the NCTRC Candidate Bulletin. More detailed information about the exam—which is now computerized—such as when and where it is administered, and sitting requirements in order to qualify to take the exam are available at:

National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification
7 Elmwood Drive
New City, NY 10956
Telephone: 845 639-1439
Fax: 845 639-1471
Website: www.NCTRC.org

Section One of this Study Guide includes the following four chapters:

- Chapter One: Introduction to the Study Guide.
- Chapter Two: What is Competence and How is It Measured?
- Chapter Three: Strategies for Preparing and Taking the Test.
- Chapter Four: Basic Information about the Test Content.

Section Two of this Study Guide:

- Chapter Five: Warm Up Items (90 items)
- Chapter Six: Practice Test 1 (90 items) Practice Test 2 (90 items)
- Chapter Seven: Diagnostic and Review Items (240 items)
Purpose of the Study Guide

The purpose of this Study Guide is to assist candidates in preparing for the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification’s (NCTRC) national certification examination for Therapeutic Recreation Specialists. The Study Guide’s mission is two-fold: a.) to provide information on reducing test anxiety and improving test performance; and b.) to provide numerous sample questions, similar to those actually found on the exam, which will allow candidates to practice and self-assess their own readiness for the test.

We have tried to provide enough background information to give you some idea of what to expect when you take or “sit” for the exam. Every attempt has been made to make this Study Guide both usable and “user friendly.” We hope you will find it both a valuable resource and a learning tool. This Study Guide is meant to be used in conjunction with the NCTRC Candidate Bulletin, which provides very specific information about registering for and taking the national exam.

For many individuals, the thought of taking a certification examination can be unsettling. We often hear statements like, “I have never taken a comprehensive exam, there is so much information. How do I learn it all?” or “I’ve been out of school for ten years, how do I go about studying for the test?” Be assured that many of your colleagues across the nation have the same types of questions that you do. These kinds of questions, and others, hopefully will be answered by reading and completing this Study Guide.

We have tried to provide you with a condensed but complete set of materials. We trust that you will find the information and resources contained in the Study Guide to be helpful in getting ready for the national examination.

How to Use the Study Guide

We advise that you read the first four chapters before going to the sample test questions. The first three provide background information. You may find the third chapter helpful at several points in your own preparation.

The fourth chapter is important in that it gives you information about what will be on the test. The NCTRC Content Outline represents the result of several NCTRC committees working in conjunction with Educational Testing Service (ETS) and lays the foundation for the examination. The Content Outline contains eight areas, that are represented on the test. In our overview, we give you an idea of what information comes from each of the eight areas, as well as references to scrutinize if some content sounds unfamiliar to you. **Study the Content Outline and accompanying information thoroughly.** This is the most complete information you will receive about what will be on the test.

Before we go further, we want to clarify an important point. The format used for the items is nearly identical to that used by NCTRC and ETS to develop the national certification test. However, do not expect to see the same items on the actual NCTRC test. **The items in these chapters represent similar format and content as the NCTRC exam, but this does not mean they are the same items found on the test.** Keep in mind that these are practice items.

The sample test items are divided into three chapters. The first is a set of 90 “warm-up” items that you may want to use if it has been a while since you have taken a multiple-choice test. Familiarize yourself with the style of the items and get back into the feel of taking a test. The content was randomly selected from all eight areas of the Content Outline. A scoring sheet is provided at the end of this chapter.
The second chapter in this section provides two complete practice tests that mimic the proportions of the actual test. We have developed items in the same proportional amounts as you will find on the actual exam. (For example, out of the 90 items, the area of Assessment has about 14 items.) More information about the percentages of items on the actual test is found in Chapter Four: Background Information.

We suggest you sit and take Practice Test 1 in one sitting, to get the feel of how you will fare physically and mentally during the actual test. While we cannot copy the real testing environment, especially since computers are used, we want you to get a notion of how physical and mental fatigue may affect you. If this is significant, you may want to review the chapter on Strategies for Test Preparation.

A scoring key is provided at the end of Practice Test 1, and should help you determine if you need to move on to Practice Test 2. A second answer sheet and scoring key are provided for Practice Test 2.

The scoring keys provide more detailed diagnostic information about which parts of the Content Outline you did well on, and which you did not. If there is one or more areas in which you did not do well, you may want to move on to the third chapter of items.

Depending on your scores for either or both exams, you may want to progress on to the third chapter in this section. The Diagnostic and Review Items cover each of the eight areas, with 30 questions each.

The purpose of the third chapter in this section is to give you even more practice taking items concerning certain content areas. Each of the eight areas is clearly labeled, with 30 items per area. Again, we remind you that these identical items will not be found on the actual NCTRC test. But if you find that you miss several items, say concerning documentation and goal writing, you will know this is an area on which you should concentrate your efforts before you sit for the national exam.

Remember, the Study Guide is meant to be a framework to help you prepare for and to let you know what to expect on the test. You may use it as a diagnostic tool of sorts to learn the areas where you need more preparation.