



Study Guide for the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist Certification Examination

5th Edition

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Jean E. Folkerth, ReD, CTRS



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STUDY GUIDE

for the

Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
Certification Examination

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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We also appreciate the support of our friends, families, and partners.

The staff at Sagamore-Venture, once again, has been exceptional. We appreciate the support and enthusiasm of their efforts.

A graphic for 'SECTION ONE' featuring a complex, abstract design of overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of orange and yellow, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text 'SECTION ONE' is centered in white, bold, uppercase letters.

SECTION ONE

1

Introduction to the Study Guide

Welcome to the fifth edition of the *Study Guide for the Therapeutic Recreation Specialist Certification Examination*. We are excited to tell you that this edition (2018) has changed significantly from previous editions in 2005, 1997, 1990, and 2012. This is largely due to two reasons: (a) the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) has recently updated the Job Analysis, which helps structure the content of the test, and (b) the updated test has a newer format of 150 items *without* the former testlets. Therefore, we have restructured the *Study Guide* to align more closely with the most recent NCTRC exam content and format. We have also added hundreds of flashcards available from Sagamore-Venture to help you better prepare for the test.

As always, the absolute best information about the NCTRC exam comes directly from NCTRC. Candidates are encouraged to go directly to NCTRC for the most accurate, complete, and timely information. Candidates should not rely on other sources, such as word-of-mouth, colleagues, or unofficial websites or social media (such as Facebook) for correct information. Detailed information about the exam, such as when and where it is administered and sitting requirements in order to qualify for the exam, are available at:

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Every test candidate is responsible for ensuring that he or she gets the best information available, directly from the National Office staff. Standards change periodically as do the test format and structure, so it is wise to check with the NCTRC staff to get the most accurate and timely information.

Purpose of the Study Guide

The purpose of this *Study Guide* is to assist candidates in preparing for the NCTRC national certification examination for TR specialists. The *Study Guide's* mission is twofold: (a) to provide information that helps candidates reduce test anxiety and maximize test performance; and (b) to provide numerous sample questions, similar to those actually found on the exam, that 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, not as a replacement for, the *NCTRC Information for New Applicants*, one of the official documents found on the NCTRC website that provides very specific information about registering for and taking the national exam. In this *Study Guide* we do not address the sitting requirements or qualifications for taking the exam, as the candidate should go directly

to NCTRC for that information. We do, however, cover the basics about the exam itself, and most importantly, provide over 850 items that are similar to the exam items. We have added nearly 100 new items in this fifth edition.

The *Study Guide* is divided into two basic sections.

Section One includes the following four chapters:

- Chapter One: Introduction to the Study Guide
- Chapter Two: Details about the NCTRC Exam
- Chapter Three: Strategies for Preparing and Taking the Test
- Chapter Four: Basic Information about the Test Content

Section Two of this *Study Guide* includes the following:

- Chapter Five:
Warm-Up Items (250+ items)
- Chapter Six:
Practice Test #1 (150 items)
- Chapter Seven:
Practice Test #2 (150 items)
- Chapter Eight:
Practice Test #3 (150 items)
- Chapter Nine:
Practice Test #4 (150 items)

A scoring sheet and a scoring key with the answers to each test are found at the end of each respective chapter.

How to Use the *Study Guide*

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 10 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. Hopefully, these kinds of questions and others 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* helpful in getting ready for the national examination.

We advise that you read the first four chapters before going to the sample test questions. The beginning chapters in Section One provide important background information on the test and how to best prepare for

it. Chapter Two covers basic information about the test such as number and distribution of items on the exam. This chapter contains the NCTRC Exam Content Outline, which forms the basis for the test. Chapter Three provides a variety of helpful hints in preparing for as well as taking the actual test. Chapter Four provides an extensive summary of the content presented on the exam, including useful references at the end of each section.

The NCTRC Exam Content Outline, presented in both Chapters Two and Four, represents the result of several NCTRC committees working in conjunction with the Prometric testing company and lays the foundation for the examination. The Content Outline contains six areas that are represented on the test.

In Chapter Four, we give you an idea of the information covered in each of the six areas, as well as references to scrutinize if some content sounds unfamiliar to you. **Study the Content Outline and accompanying information thoroughly.** Knowing this information can make the difference between passing or not passing the national examination.

Before we go further, we want to clarify an important point. The format used for the items within this *Study Guide* is nearly identical to that used by NCTRC and Prometric to develop the national certification test. However, do not expect to see the same items on the actual NCTRC test. **The items in this Study Guide 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 and that the authors of the *Study Guide* are not privy to the items on the exam.

In Section Two of the *Study Guide*, the sample test items are divided into five chapters. Beyond the first chapter that contains 250+ random practice items, each of the remaining chapters has a 150-item test that mirrors the 150-item NCTRC examination. The items in each of the four practice tests are distributed across the Exam Content Outline in the same proportions as the official test. See Chapters Two and Four for more information on the Exam Content Outline.

If it has been a while since you have taken a multiple-choice test, take as many of these tests as you need to increase your comfort level. Familiarize yourself with the style of the items and get back into the feel of taking a test.

We suggest you sit and take each practice test 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 the test is computerized, 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 sheet is provided at the end of each practice test chapter, as is a scoring key. The scoring keys should help you determine if you need more practice by taking additional tests. The scoring keys also provide more detailed diagnostic information about which parts of the Exam Content Outline you did well on and which you did not. If there are one or more areas in which you did not do well, you may want to review the Exam Content Outline in Chapters Two and Four, especially the expanded content in Chapter Four with references

that may help your understanding of the material.

Again, we remind you that 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 study 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.