



THERAPEUTIC RECREATION

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ABSTRACT

As the importance of the concept of recreation began to be understood in the world, especially after the industrial revolution, this field has developed very rapidly. As the working people reach less working hours, they have turned to new pursuits and created various activities to value their leisure time. Renewal, which is one of the word meaning of recreation, plays an important role not only for healthy individuals but also in the physical (motor), social and mental development of people with impaired health, elderly, and for individuals who have physical and mental and psychological problems. Therapeutic recreation is one of the most important elements of health recreation. In particular, it increases the life quality of disabled people and assists to integrate them into social life and optimize their health situation.

INTRODUCTION

Recreation in general; described as activities which will allow the individuals who are adversely affected by intense work and environmental influences to recuperate their physical and mental well-being and to be satisfied with their individual needs and expectations in order to enjoy it, to take pleasure and to participate with her/his free will in their leisure time that is apart from the working time and the time allocated for the compulsory needs (Hacıoğlu *et al.*, 2003). The leisure time that is apart from the time that people use for working, sleeping and meeting their compulsory needs and the voluntary activities that do not seek profit which realize the renewal of individuals in terms of creativity, cultural etc. have approached in the context of recreation (Albayrak, 2012; Sağlık *et al.*, 2014).

The benefits provided by the recreation, expressed as activities realized to value the leisure time, are multi-faceted as physical, psychological, mental and social. These benefits that recreation provide play an important role in terms of increasing the quality of human life. When these assessed in general terms, it contributes to preventing the negativities faced by both healthy and problematic individuals and communities before happening and contributing to their solution after they emerge (Arslan, 2013; Ceyhan, 2008).

Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic recreation (TR), which is a special service area within the concept of recreation, is a service that adopts recreation treatment method in the context of obtaining the life quality for the individuals. In other words, it is possible to define a therapeutic recreation as a type of functional service that has an effect on the life satisfaction and transforming leisure activities into a habit (Rothwell and Piat, 2006). According to the way of application, therapeutic recreation is a medically approved treatment method for people with physical, mental or emotional problems with the help of activities in the presence of professional specialists (Dustin, 2000). This method aims to generate and add a positive change to an important level of individual's lifestyle and identity. Within this framework, it focuses on the recuperation, recovery and behavioral change of the individual through various therapeutic leisure activities (Bunt *et al.*, 2008). Therapeutic recreation is a field of practice that has its own definition and approach patterns in different recreational activities. This area is a recreational activity that is focused on improving and developing the health status, functional capacities and life quality of people with special needs with experiential activities or aid-purposed interventions (Carter *et al.*, 2003). Therapeutic recreation plays an active role in the treatment of individuals with physical and emotional disorders that have been associated with years of life in the individual.

In other words, it can be a subsidiary factor that helps to comply with the emergence of the various disorders in the old ages caused by the lifespan from the birth to the elderly years of the individuals. Therapeutic recreation allows an individual to develop new skills and social functioning in daily life as well as improving the existing interests and skills (WHOQOL, 1998; Dustin, 2000). Therapeutic recreation is provided by practitioners with practical training within the academic and therapeutic service area. It is aimed to organize activities for individuals' special situations, interests and needs according to their capacities, and programs that are responsive to them. In this context, firstly, recuperation of individual from the life-related obstacles and illnesses and protecting his/her health status by creating stability or balance against problems threatening his/ her health; at the same time, self-discovery and self-realization of the individuals can be regarded as an encouragement for health through leisure time. In addition, it can be perceived as a set of activities that reduce and prevent health problems (Austin and Crawford, 2001). As a result, therapeutic recreation not only includes health-oriented definitions or ways of treatment that include illnesses, but also allows physical and cognitive, social and emotional development and full and independent participation of the individual in life. In this context, therapeutic recreation adds meaning and purpose to the life of the individual. Because the mind, body and emotions are integrated and in a relationship with each other. Functional impairment of any of these affects others (Dustin, 2000). Therapeutic recreation is to help beginners to teach how to use the available potential in leisure time at the optimum level and to improve the quality of life and to improve the quality of life. Functional impairment of any of these affects the others (Dustin, 2000). The first purpose of the therapeutic recreation is to help individuals to learn how to use their available potential within the leisure time at the optimum level and to improve the life quality and to renew the health status. Therapeutic recreation provides support for the realization of a balance in life by helping and for adapting to the reality with the use of leisure time which is regarded as a way of personal development in terms of health protection and renewal (Austin and Crawford, 2001). The attention has been drawn to the fact that positive attainments are gained in terms of behaviors of individuals who have harmony in their attitudes and behaviors with therapy-like leisure activities and (Austin, 2013). Thus, therapy-focused leisure activities become a spiral of positive behaviors that give individuals energy and power against the increasing difficulties and opportunities emerging in their lives. Increasing the level of positive emotions, strengths and beliefs of individuals will make them able to enjoy their lives. The inability of individuals to cope with psychological distress on their own in certain periods is an important focal point of the therapy. It plays an active role in encouraging individuals to discover themselves, meet their own beings, and develop their strength (Carruthers and Hood, 2007).

Therapeutic recreation therapy is an area that serves with the approach of collecting concepts such as therapy, leisure and recreation under one roof and is an area that assists to individuals to create an independent way of life and to improve the life quality. Therapy becomes a strategy for individuals who have special situations to participate in leisure activities and achieve the required qualifications in order to reach the results (Austin, 2013). Recreation and leisure are used as a technique in therapy. It is emphasized that it creates a positive change and increase improve the mental situations of

the individuals with low functional skills or special behavioral problems by a leisure activity that is liked and enjoyed by the individual. It can also be specified as a method of using leisure activities in the process of helping individuals to become better at maximum level (Leitner, 2004). Providing the expected behavior control for the individuals with the special needs through the leisure time participation strengthens the holistic life. The importance of leisure time participation as therapy is emphasized in reaching the highest possible level of health and well-being (Van and Heintzman, 1996). While recreation has a subjective effect on achievement, pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction of the individual by increasing the specific skills of the individual in his/ her preferred activities: the therapy becomes objective with the acquisition of good feelings. Because activities towards the therapy required to be consciously and deliberately chosen for the individual. The individual is expected to benefit in terms of the feature he/she needs. This synthesis between therapy and recreation embodies the concept of therapeutic recreation. Issues have been expressed and addressed in many countries about the benefits and contributions of the involvement of the individuals with special needs into the leisure activities. Local governments, recreation organizations, hospitals and other community services have considered this issue seriously and have actively involved. They have given a different approach to the use of leisure activities by evaluating the use of leisure activities as a therapy. In this framework, therapy has taken its place in recreational activities as a process and method for treating or remedying individuals who fall outside of the norms of society (Trowbridge, 1980). Treatment, which can be considered as a component of therapeutic therapy as well, generally involves the coordination of various health disciplines, which helps to reduce the negative indications of the individual and improve both societal and quality of life. Therapeutic recreation is also a behavioral health service among these disciplines (Holcomb *et al.*, 1998; Orr, 2010). Therapeutic recreation proactively serves for the encouragement and sustainment of the empowerment of the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive functions of individuals who are sick, disabled or under different circumstances. Peterson and Gun (1984: 9) divide therapeutic recreational services into three parts: therapy / rehabilitation, leisure training and leisure time participation.

Users of Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic recreation includes individuals with disabilities, injuries or adverse conditions, who also face various problems during adolescence and old age, seeking to overcome them, and trying to adapt to normal life (Austin and Crawford, 2001: 9). Therapeutic recreation includes individuals who do not have any health problems, as well as assessing and treating functional deficits in individuals with special conditions. For therapeutic recreation, the phenomenon of problem-solving is not limited or restricted (Austin and Crawford, 1996, Carter, 1999, Kraus and Shank, 1992; Mably and Mac Neil, 2002). Today, the World Health Organization (WHO) has supported the idea of using therapeutic recreation to ensure individuals competence in efficiency and power rather than helping people with illness or disability (Porter and Burlingame, 2006, Porter and Van Puymbroeck, 2007, Linley and Joseph, 2004, WHO, 2001). The basic understanding of individual empowerment is regarded as the processing of positive elements such as the aspirations of a person in life, the value of the existence, hopes and interests. It is also used to

reduce the fear of death of elderly, to remove, reduce and treat the symptoms considered as difficulties such as permanent illness and addiction (Carruthers and Hood, 2007). As a result, there are possible activities for each behavioral problem in the context of therapeutic recreation. These activities are appropriate for the dependent, semi-dependent, or independent individuals, but also for elderly individuals as well as acute, chronic, healing, or for patients in remission (Trowbridge, 1980).

RESULTS

Therapeutic recreation tries to maximize the life activities and qualities of individuals who have health problems due to various reasons. In therapeutic recreation, a special program should be prepared considering the current situation of the individuals who are working according to their own wishes and desires which is one of the most prominent elements of recreation and it should give joy to the individual. The therapeutic recreation should be educated and equipped on this subject. In the case that the individual receives medical support from a health institution, it should be considered while preparing the programs. Readiness tests can be applied to the person before the therapeutic recreation program. After the program is applied, the test can be re-applied and the results can be evaluated.

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