

Participant Handbook



You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

-Plato

TRS

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Therapeutic Recreation Services of the Roanoke Valley

Therapeutic Recreation Services of the Roanoke Valley Mission:

Therapeutic Recreation Services of the Roanoke Valley (TRS) provides specialized, adaptive, and inclusive recreation/leisure services that empower people with disabilities to gain the knowledge and skills for the development of a leisure lifestyle that meets their interests and needs. TRS serves adults with cognitive/developmental disabilities, head injury related disabilities, visual impairments, or those with psychiatric disabilities.

TRS is a partnership between Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke, and the City of Salem offering recreation programs valley-wide to people with disabilities.

Therapeutic Recreation is considered purposeful play; providing opportunities for people with disabilities to learn and grow through recreation and interactions with others. All TRS programs work towards goals with the participants; whether it is learning a new leisure skill, appropriate interactions for a specific situation, or other activities of daily living. The typical goals for the programs TRS offers are to increase: social skills, leisure education, leisure awareness, physical fitness, or functional independence. TRS also works on participant individual goals that are developed with the participant, family members/care providers, and TRS staff.

Not all leisure experiences in community settings need to be successful, but the privilege to achieve or fail is a part of a learning process that for too long has been denied individuals with disabilities.
-Stuart Schleien & M. Tipton Ray

How to Become a Participant

New participants will need to meet with the TRS Supervisor for an assessment to discuss what their leisure interests are, and why they want to attend therapeutic recreation programs. During this assessment, the TRS staff and participant will develop goals. This assessment must take place before the participant is able to attend programs.

New participants must complete a Participant Information Form. This information includes a participant photo, emergency contacts, and medication that may be needed by EMT responders. Participant Information Forms are updated annually, or when there are any changes in medications, living arrangements, phone number, or mobility. Participants should contact TRS if any of these changes occur. The Participant Information Form must be completed fully before the participant is able to attend programs.

The Participant Information Forms also includes a photo release for pictures to be taken of the participant and used for marketing of TRS programs. This photo can be used for the program guide and may appear on the TRS web page.

Any information that participants share with TRS staff is kept confidential. TRS Support Staff will carry a copy of the Participant Information Form with them at program in case of an emergency. TRS will not share personal information about a participant without their signed consent.

Registration

Once the assessment is complete, a participant is able to register for TRS programs. Registration is taken via telephone, online, postal mail, or in person at the Brambleton Center. Mail-in and online registrations will be processed the morning of registration in the order in which they were received, and may be submitted prior to the registration date. Registration can occur up to 2 weeks before the first day of a program. TRS distributes program guides four times a year.

TRS offers programs four core areas that mirror general programs offered in the Roanoke Valley. The goal is for participants to learn the skills needed, so they may be able to attend general recreation programs.

- Cultural Arts: painting, photography, pottery, music, dance, or theater productions
- Life Skills: activities of daily living and social outings
- Outdoor & Travel: hiking, climbing, biking, day and overnight trips
- Wellness & Fitness: group exercise, aquatics, and health classes

Programs may fill before the registration session concludes. TRS considers these “High Demand” classes. “High Demand” classes are marked with a star next to the title in the program guide. If a class fills, the participant will automatically be placed on a waitlist. Participants will be contacted if placed on the waitlist and a space becomes available.

Payment

Participants will need to pay for programs before the program occurs. TRS accepts cash, personal checks, money orders, Visa, Master Card, or Discover. TRS understands that some participants need to submit an invoice before being able to pay for programs. Participants will have either two weeks after registration occurs or before the program ends to pay the balance. TRS will set up payment plans on an individual bases. Participants are not able to register for programs if they have an outstanding balance of over \$200. TRS can refuse a registration without payment, if a participant has a history of delinquent payment.

TRS has two options for financial support to attend programs. Rec Bucks is a program that waives fees \$100 per person, not to exceed \$500 per family, based on income level. The Rec Buck application can be completed annually. Rec Bucks cannot be applied to overdue balances. Rec Bucks cannot be used for overnight trips.

TRS also has a scholarship program using the same financial criteria as Rec Bucks. Scholarships are limited, as they are available by donations from community members and civic organizations.



Refunds & Credits

In the event that TRS cancels a class, participants will automatically receive a full credit to their account. Credits will be carried on the account and can be used toward future courses and activities. If a participant would like a refund, notify TRS and a refund will be processed within three weeks if the amount is over \$25. Credit amounts under \$25 will remain on accounts for future use.

If a participant must withdraw from a course, they must be withdrawn before the class begins. A participant will receive a refund if another TRS participant can fill your spot, as long as the program has met the minimum number of participants. Credits for trips or special events, such as theatre productions where tickets are purchased in advance, cannot be given after tickets are purchased unless the participant's place can be filled.

TRS programs typically will have waitlists, participants should cancel as soon as they know they will not be attending to ensure participants on the waitlist are able to attend.

TRS Staff

TRS Support Staff attend TRS programs to support the participant to be as independent as possible. Support Staff do not complete projects for participants, but encourage participants through verbal prompts or hand-under-hand support. Support Staff work with participants to help them learn skills and serve as a role model for appropriate behaviors in specific situations. Support Staff work with the participants using behavioral support techniques listed below. Support Staff are part-time staff who have been trained to work specifically with people with disabilities in recreation. Some TRS Support Staff are therapeutic recreation students or young professionals. Other Support Staff work for residential facilities, Goodwill Industries, Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare, schools, or are retired. TRS also has volunteers that support participants while attending programs.

TRS will take therapeutic recreation interns throughout the year. Interns are students studying to be a Certified Therapeutic Recreational Specialist (CTRS). Interns work with TRS from 14-16 weeks, creating programs, working with participants, and supporting TRS administratively.

A CTRS is a person who has graduated from an accredited school with a degree in therapeutic recreation, and has passed the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC). The role of NCTRC is to ensure that people who provide therapeutic recreation are trained to offer the highest quality of care as a therapeutic recreation professional.

TRS completes a criminal history background check on all full-time and part-time staff, interns, and volunteers who interact with participants.

TRS Support Staff are not trained to administer medication to participants. Support Staff can carry medications and give prompts



when it is time for medications to be take, but cannot open bottles or blister packs. Medications must be in the prescription bottle with the participants name and dose of medication on it. Participants must be able to take their medication independently if needed during program.

TRS Support Staff will not provide personal care for participants. They will prompt participants, and use hand-under-hand support for zippering or tying shoes, but will not enter a restroom stall with a participant.

Transportation

Participants are asked to provide their own transportation, as TRS provided transportation is available on a very limited basis. TRS has access to two accessible (wheelchair lift) and two 10 passenger Roanoke County vehicles, one accessible Roanoke City vehicle, and vehicles from RADAR. TRS provides transportation for an additional cost to most programs offered. The cost for TRS transportation is \$3 per trip. If a program meets five (5) times, the transportation fee will be \$15. Transportation will be limited on specific programs to participants who live independently, or in group homes without transportation available. Transportation is available from participant's homes, places of employment, or from pick-up points. TRS pick-up points are: Goodwill Vinton: 907 Hardy Rd, Vinton 24179, Goodwill Salem Lakeside: 1489 E Main St, Salem 24153, and the Brambleton Center: 3738 Brambleton Ave, Roanoke 24018. TRS strives for participants not being on the van for longer than one and a half hours before or after program.

TRS limits transportation for participants who live in group homes without transportation available or who live independently, for specific TRS programs. These programs will have the word "Limited" written next to the transportation fee. TRS is also looking for families and care providers who would be willing to carpool and pick-up/drop-off other participants.

TRS provides a Support Staff on the van during transportation. The Support Staff will assist participants to and from the van, if needed. Support Staff will not enter a participant's home, apartment building, or group home. Support Staff will not sign participants out of their group home or place of employment.

All passengers on Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke, or RADAR vans must wear safety belts at all times. If a participant refuses to wear the safety belt, transportation will no longer be provided.

Cancelation

If a participant needs to cancel transportation, call TRS as soon as possible. Do not leave a message on the TRS staff voicemail on a Friday after 5pm for a Saturday program. If canceling for a Saturday program on a Friday after 5pm, please speak with a front desk staff (540-772-7529 ext. 0).

TRS does not follow the Roanoke County, City of Roanoke, or City of Salem school weather cancelation policy. Due to the nature of providing transportation, TRS will contact participants if road conditions are unsafe. TRS programs will be cancel a program does not meet a minimum number of registrations. This number varies depending on the program.

Attending Programs

All participants who are registered for a program will receive a Route in the mail about a week before the program is scheduled to occur. A TRS Route includes a short description of the program and the transportation pick-up and drop-off times. Participants, group home staff, family members/care providers should keep the TRS Route accessible for the duration of the program. For programs that meet for multiple weeks at the same facility, participants will only receive one Route for the entire program. Routes can also be emailed to participants, family member/care providers, and care providers upon request.

TRS transportation will wait five (5) minutes for a participant after their scheduled pick-up time. After that, the van will continue on the route. If a participant is a “no show” without prior notification three (3) times within a semester, the participant will be dropped from transportation for the remainder of that semester. When meeting at pick-up points, if a participant’s transportation is more than five (5) minutes late for pick-up/drop-off time, three (3) times within a semester, the participant will be removed from transportation for the remainder of that semester. If a participant is removed from transportation, they will receive a refund for those fees. Based upon registrations, activities may be moved to an alternate location to help facilitate transportation needs.

TRS will not change Routes three (3) days before a program. If a participant needs to be picked up at a different location, the change must be made at least three (3) days before the program occurs. It is best to let TRS staff know pick-up points at the time of registration.

Participants should dress appropriately to participate in the planned active. If specific clothing is required, it will be listed on the Route.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy

While at TRS program, participants should only use their cell phones or other electronic devices in the event of an emergency or to contact a family member/care provider regarding transportation. All participants who bring cell phones are asked to keep their cell phones in their pockets, purses, or coats. If a participant is demonstrating improper use, individual arrangements will be made to ensure that they will not be making calls at a time when cell phone use is not a necessity.

Participants will always be allowed to use their cell phones in necessary or emergency situations while at TRS programs. TRS programs can provide an opportunity for participants to learn to use their cell phones independently at necessary times. These guidelines are in effect

to eliminate the possibility of social calls, text messaging, and gaming that could take away from program time and participants working towards their individual goals and program goals.

Code of Conduct

Participant who smoke, should do so in designated areas only. Participant will not be permitted to leave a program to smoke, they may smoke upon arrival at program, or before transportation leaves.

No alcoholic beverages may be bought or consumed while at TRS programs.

Behaviors that are considered inappropriate, and can lead to removal from program include:

- Hitting, pushing, or shoving other participants or staff
- Using foul/abusive language or gestures towards participants or staff
- Being disrespectful towards staff or not following directions
- Behavior harmful to participants or staff.

Behavioral Support

TRS staff work with participants on goals using behavioral support techniques. Behavioral support techniques include redirection, positive reinforcement, praise, prompting, and transition assistance.

- Redirection: If a participant is working towards a physical fitness goal, but is very focused on the local weather report calling for heavy rain, a TRS Support Staff may tell the participant they had heard the same weather report, and that they should talk about it while they are walking a few laps around the track at Fitness Club.
- Positive reinforcement: If a participant is working on keeping their voice at a lower level while they are excited, and staff notices that the participant was very excited talking about the Tech game but kept their voice at an appropriate level, the staff may tell the person what a great job they did keeping track of their voice level as they are walking to the van to ensure the praise stays private and does not embarrass the participant.
- Praise: If a participant is working toward a goal of learning how to use a pottery wheel, and is able to center their clay for the first time, staff may tell the participant they are doing a great job, give them a thumbs up, or a high five.
- Prompting: Is a way of keeping a participant aware of something that they may forget about. An example of prompting could be verbally reminding a person to wash their hands after using the restroom, using their napkin to wipe their mouth, or buckling their seatbelt while on the van.
- Transition assistance: Some participants need to understand what is happening next before they can move from one activity to another. Support staff will give prompts to let the group



know what is coming next and how long until that next activity will occur.

Participant Removal from TRS Programs

If a participant displays inappropriate behaviors while at program or during transportation, TRS Support Staff will address it with the participant at the program. TRS will create goals for the participant, and provide tools the participant and staff can use to decrease the unwanted behavior. If a behavior continues, additional techniques may be implemented to work specifically with the participant. Depending on the behavior, a participant can be removed for the remainder of the semester or longer. This process will be communicated to the participants as well as family members/care providers. If behaviors become dangerous to other participants or staff, the participants can be asked not to return to TRS program.

Step 1

TRS will issue a warning. The participant will be made aware of the offending behavior and why it is unacceptable. TRS will contact the family member/caregivers to discuss the behaviors and ways to help the participant cease the behavior.

Step 2

If the behaviors continue after the participant has been warned, and has been made aware of techniques to decrease the behavior, they will be placed on probation. A family member/caregiver will be contacted and made aware. Participants will receive a letter of their probationary status documenting their behavior and any actions taken.

Step 3

If the participant continues to exhibit inappropriate behaviors, they will be removed from TRS programs for the rest of the semester. The participant will not be able to register for TRS programs until they have met with a TRS staff.

Disruptive or Inappropriate Behaviors include by are not limited to:

- Use of foul or abusive language towards participants or staff
- Use of foul or abusive gestures towards participants or staff
- Excessive opposition/defiance towards staff
- Any behavior harmful to participants, themselves, or staff
- Threatening other participants

Hitting, shoving, or pushing of other participants or staff will not be tolerated. If these behaviors are exhibited at any time during program, a family member/care provider will be called and the participant will be removed.

