



CTRS®

Specialization Area Designation Spotlight



Laura Thornton

Thank you to NCTRC for the spotlight on my experience with obtaining a CTRS Specialization Area Designation. My name is Laura Thornton and I have been working as a recreation therapist for 11 years, with the primary focus in Behavioral Health. I gravitated towards behavioral health early in my university career. I was fortunate to gain experience through coursework with Robert Frost at Central Michigan University. Fire Up Chips! I later focused my internships on behavioral health and have worked at various hospitals and facilities in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan. My current position is at Garden City Hospital, in a 28-bed, adult behavioral health unit.

As my career progressed during my first certification cycle, I learned about the NCTRC Specialization Area Designation at a professional development conference. I saw this as an opportunity for career growth, to be more competitive when applying for new jobs, and leverage to negotiate for competitive wages. I started to focus my continuing education hours to be behavioral health-oriented, gained internship supervision hours, and worked 5,000 clinical hours – doing everything I could to meet the requirements needed for specialty certification.



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Laura Thornton (continued)

In addition to personal career growth, healthcare continues to evolve and grow. There is an increased expectation to develop specialized knowledge and skills within your scope of practice. Working towards a Specialization Area Designation will provide assurance and advancement of knowledge and skills to support quality services to the consumer. Adding an NCTRC Specialization Area Designation to your resume also can be a way to distinguish yourself within the recreation therapy scope.

In 2023, as I approached my recertification date and renewal cycle for Specialization Area Designation, I reflected on my gratitude to be a part of this creative, fun, and growing profession. I love recreation therapy and all that we represent to help a consumer with their recovery, well-being, and holistic health. Recreation therapy services are growing and as practitioners, we need to push for advocacy and advancement of the profession. I encourage my CTRS peers to explore this opportunity for Specialization Area Designation through NCTRC for growth and evaluate if it would be a good fit for your personal career goals.

Best of luck,

Laura Thornton



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Give
yourself
an edge.

Earn a Specialization
Area Designation for
your CTRS® Credential



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to learn more about
Specialization Area Designations**