



MODULE 1

# RECREATION FOUNDATIONS



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### **MODULE 1 OUTCOME:**

*Leaders promote the role of recreation in contributing to the well-being of individuals, communities, and our natural and built environments.*

## MODULE 1 – RECREATION FOUNDATIONS

- 1.1 Introduction to Recreation
- 1.2 Recreation in Rural and Remote Communities
- 1.3 Benefits of Recreation
- 1.4 Leisure Education

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Define recreation and its relationship to sport, recreation, leisure, healthy eating/healthy living, arts and cultural activities, physical activities and active living.
- Identify the importance of recreation, leisure and culture as part of a healthy and active lifestyle.
- Describe the benefits of recreation for individuals, families and communities.
- Understand how giving people information and tools can help them find or create their own recreation.
- Identify strategies for increasing participation by teaching others about recreation and leisure.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO RECREATION

Recreation contributes to vibrant and engaged individuals and communities, fostering personal, social, economic and environmental well-being. It touches on many aspects of our lives nourishing people and building strong families and communities.

In Canada, recreation is an essential community service as it provides opportunities for all citizens to participate, protects our environment, stimulates local economies and adds to the quality of life in our communities.

Recreation is more than sport. Instead recreation is defined by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association as, “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015).

### A VISION FOR RECREATION IN CANADA

We envision a Canada in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster:

- Individual wellbeing
- Community wellbeing
- The wellbeing of our natural and built environments (ISRC & CPRA, 2015)

Recognizing that recreation provides multiple pathways to well-being for individuals, for communities, and for our built and natural environments, the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (ISRC) and Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) have recently worked with the provincial and territorial governments and associations to develop [\*A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015; Pathways to Wellbeing \(pdf1\)\*](#).

The Framework describes five goals and priorities for action under each goal.

Goal 1: Foster active living through physical recreation.

Goal 2: Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.

Goal 3: Help people connect to nature through recreation.

Goal 4: Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.

Goal 5: Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

The National Framework also recognizes that community recreation reflects the unique qualities of Canada's diverse communities. There may be a pool, trails, a community hall or an arena. However, the way people recreate is shaped by local culture, geography, interests, infrastructure, resources, and of course volunteers. As a result, recreation activities can vary from community to community.



Recreation does not happen because of local government or an organization. It is a result of the passion we bring working as individuals or as part of a group. When a community development approach is utilized as a method of providing recreation, we engage citizens, strengthen relationships and encourage more involvement. Community-driven recreation also encourages a shift away from relying on someone else to provide specific programming or expecting that government will build a pool and arena in every rural location. Even more benefits result because community-driven recreation requires collaboration. This collaboration results in a network of relationships, social connections, and increased social capital and resiliency.

Recreation should be seen as a vehicle for improving quality of life, community cohesion, personal health and collective well-being. It can bring joy, challenge and excitement to our lives. When people participate in the creation and implementation of recreation in their own communities, the investment and ownership can bring with it a sense of community pride and belonging. As recreation leaders, enabling and empowering community-based recreation is a critical role.

***What is Recreation?***

Ask ten different people, “What is recreation?” and you will get ten different answers. Why? Primarily because each community is different and offers activities based on their own cultural and recreation needs.

This Guide recognizes that community recreation may include arts, crafts, sport, active living, special events, etc.

Regardless of how you perceive recreation, it is always important to encourage your community to consider a diversity of opportunities. In this way, more people will find their place and experience the benefits of participating in community recreation.

**RECREATION** involves leisure-time activities in which people choose to participate. It can be active (e.g. walking the dog, playing soccer) or passive (e.g. reading a book, enjoying a concert). Recreation can include physical activity, sport, arts, cultural activities and community events.

**COMMUNITY RECREATION** is about the informal leaders (parents, youth, coaches, teachers and other volunteers) who make recreation happen and about meaningful and accessible activities that the community creates for its own benefit.

**LEISURE** includes the activities, pursuits or actions people enjoy and therefore choose to do in their time away from work and other responsibilities.

**SPORT** is a type of physical activity with rules and is often a contest to determine a winner. In recreational sport, the emphasis is more on participation and the development of fundamental movement and sport skills.

**ACTIVE LIVING**, or active, healthy living, indicates the connection between an active lifestyle and a healthy lifestyle. Active living means we value and integrate physical activity into our daily routines. Active living is one component of a healthy lifestyle.

**PARKS** are associated with recreation, particularly in the context of public or municipal recreation. They are outdoor environments developed for our enjoyment and include playgrounds, developed and natural green-space, land and water trails, and government-designated parks.

**OUTDOOR SPACES** refers to our outdoor environments where people choose to recreate and include parks, playgrounds, community gardens, skating rinks, streets, schoolyards and fields, trails, waterways, campgrounds, green-space, and “the bush”.



**RECREATION PLACES** refers to facilities and community infrastructure providing opportunities to participate in recreation. These places include community halls, recreation complexes, arenas and pools, libraries, schools, museums, art galleries, private gyms, etc. that are the indoor spaces people usually use for recreation.



**ARTS** reflect culture and are a way of communicating through a medium that can be shared with others. Arts may be categorized as visual (e.g. drawing, painting, photography, architecture), literary (e.g. writing, comics, blogging), performing (e.g. music, theatre, dance), culinary, etc.

**CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**, within a recreation context, reflect local heritage, social traditions and popular trends. Participation may involve traditional games and celebrations (e.g. stick gambling, drumming), special events and festivals (e.g. Dawson City Music Festival, Sourdough Rendezvous), visits to facilities (e.g. museums, art galleries, historic sites), reading (e.g. books, newspapers), listening to music (e.g. radio, iPod, concerts), etc.

## Recreation and Health

Over the past quarter century, obesity and physical inactivity have become significant social and economic concerns. Physical inactivity is a risk factor that contributes to nearly two million deaths annually (World Health Organization, 2009). In Canada, it is a leading factor in the incidence of obesity among adults and of increased rates of chronic diseases such as cancer and diabetes (Public Health Agency of Canada & Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2011). Physical inactivity is estimated to cost almost seven billion dollars annually in Canada (Janssen, 2012).

For the first time in recent history, children face a shorter life expectancy than their parents (Ontario Medical Association, 2012). The 2007 Canadian Health Measures Survey found children to be more obese, less fit, and weaker than in 1981 (Statistics Canada, 2010). At 26%, the Canadian rate of childhood obesity ranks as one of the highest among developed countries (Merrifield, 2007). With only 7% of Canadian children and youth meeting guidelines for minimum levels of daily physical activity (Colley et al., 2011), physical inactivity is a major factor in the obesity crisis.

This data clearly shows that physical inactivity affects individuals, communities, societies, and economies. Recreation, particularly active recreation, offers an opportunity to counteract some of the damaging effects of a more sedentary and isolated lifestyle. Participating together in active recreation can be enjoyable and lead to physically, emotionally and socially healthier lifestyles.

### A SUCCESS STORY FROM MARSH LAKE (aud2)



Katherine Sheepway

Watch the following creative short video, [Active for Life \(vid1\)](#), depicting these statistics.





### ***Active Living***

Recreation encourages an active, healthy lifestyle. Active lifestyles result when people value and integrate physical activity into their daily routines.

The [Yukon Active Living Strategy \(pdf2\)](#) encourages citizens to be active on a daily basis. Its goals address emerging priorities designed to counteract increasing rates of obesity and physical inactivity through a variety of programs and initiatives. A particular emphasis is placed on strategies that encourage Yukoners to reach [Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines \(url2\)](#) and on programs that enable children and youth to be active during the after school time period.

Goals of Yukon Active Living Strategy are based on a philosophy of health equity, inclusion and collaboration. They define the broad, long-term changes needed to realize the vision of a more active Yukon and healthy communities. Implementation occurs through four settings: Active Yukoners, Active Yukon Communities, Active Yukon Schools and Active Yukon Workplaces. Although responsibility for implementing the Strategy rests with the Sport and Recreation Branch, a more active Yukon becomes a reality when governments, communities, businesses, nonprofit groups and Yukon residents work cooperatively and collaboratively to increase opportunities and provide support for more active lifestyles.

## **1.2 RECREATION IN RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES**

Recreation nourishes Canada's Northern, remote and rural communities. It provides opportunities for residents to lead active, healthy lifestyles and contributes to quality of life and well-being, and fosters personal, social, economic and environmental benefits. Recreation brings people together and can be a vehicle for addressing some of the challenges facing rural and remote communities.

Recreation programs and services are not delivered in rural, remote or Northern communities in the same way they are in urban centres. In addition to obvious factors such as a smaller population base, limited resources or geographic distance, there are other factors influencing recreation opportunities and experiences in these communities. For example, communities may face challenges sustaining recreation opportunities which suit local interests and infrastructure; funds for facility operations and maintenance can be limited; attracting and retaining staff with relevant training and experience can be difficult; and volunteer burnout is all too common (Sparks, 2011). Furthermore, high turnover of staff from "outside" the region makes relationship building with the community difficult.

Despite the challenges, meeting and serving community recreation needs and interests is a priority in small communities. The challenge is to do so within the limits of people's time and energy, and without placing "an unsustainable financial burden on the community" (Sport and Recreation Queensland, 2003).

Recreation fosters many positive outcomes particularly in rural, remote and Northern communities. But perhaps the greatest benefit lies in its potential to bring communities together. It is a stepping stone encouraging people to get to know each other and to participate in activities together. Recreation builds trusting and respectful relationships in our communities. When residents trust and respect each other, they get better at tackling some of the bigger issues facing our communities today; issues such as homelessness, poverty and chronic disease. Recreation leaders need to understand and promote the power of recreation to build community, provide opportunities for positive engagement, strengthen social capital, and foster positive personal, social, environmental and economic benefits.



### 1.3 BENEFITS OF RECREATION

Recreation and parks are essential services. Everyone has the right to participate regardless of gender, ethnicity, income status or ability. Communities that support these services in a way that reflects local values and traditions, offer a quality of life to residents. Recreation and parks positively impact the health of individuals, communities and our environment. We call these impacts or outcomes the Benefits of Recreation.

*The National Benefits Hub* ([url3](#)) describes the personal, social, economic and environmental benefits of recreation and parks. Eight key messages demonstrate 50 outcome statements that are supported by research. This evidence demonstrates that recreation, parks, sports, fitness, active living, arts and cultural services:

1. are essential to personal health and well-being,
2. provide the key to balanced human development,
3. provide a foundation for quality of life,
4. reduce self-destructive and anti-social behaviour,
5. build strong families and healthy communities,
6. reduce health care, social service and police/justice costs,
7. are a significant economic generator, and
8. support green spaces that are essential to environmental and ecological well-being, even survival.

Start conversations in your community about the benefits of parks and recreation and find out what local residents do in their free time and why. This useful scanning tool ([pdf3](#)) might also be a good starting point for working with your community to determine their assets as well as areas for growth. When connecting with youth, you may wish to use a shorter tool ([pdf4](#)).

## 1.4 LEISURE EDUCATION

Recreation and leisure are very similar in meaning. However, when we use the term recreation, we are often referring to structured activities such as a program or a supervised facility. Leisure is somewhat different in that it is defined as any activity or experience people choose to do for enjoyment away from their work or other responsibilities. In this Guide the term leisure education is used. However, the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada uses recreation education. Whichever term you choose to use, helping people develop leisure literacy is the same process.

### ***Leisure education is:***

1. Helping people understand what recreation/leisure is and how they could benefit from participating.
2. Teaching people how to find and get involved in leisure activities that are enjoyable and contribute to positive health.

As described in the Benefits of Recreation section, there are many individual, family and community benefits that result from recreation and leisure. Unfortunately, no one will benefit unless there is participation.

Recreation leaders can encourage more people to join in by telling them about the value of leisure, showing them the many options, and supporting them to try activities that are satisfying.

Educating people about recreation can be done face to face, through the web and social media, or through existing recreation or community services. Even if people are not yet involved in recreation programs, there are ideas and tools that encourage them to try. Potentially, leaders can educate others about recreation through every communication, program or service.



## ROLE OF THE RECREATION LEADER IN LEISURE EDUCATION

Although leisure is ultimately an individual responsibility, recreation organizations and leaders can contribute to improving the quality of life for both individuals and the community.

Generally, we think of the role of recreation leaders as it relates to managing facilities and offering programs, but there is a need to go beyond that and further explore our role as educators. Educating people about leisure can increase their ability to participate in recreation. This type of education involves increasing awareness of opportunities, teaching basic skills, linking people to resources and encouraging those who lack confidence.

As recreation leaders we often teach skills for participation in “learn-to” programs and training camps for sport and other pursuits. Although these are important, it is the more complex skills of assessing our needs, locating resources, making decisions, and following through that encourage people to take responsibility for their leisure, create positive experiences and explore new passions.

Educating people for leisure can show them its value, help them locate activities they find interesting and support them in making decisions that are a good fit by matching resources and skills to opportunities.

### **GOAL OF LEISURE EDUCATION: LEISURE LITERACY**

The goal of leisure education is to equip individuals and groups to be accountable for their own recreation and leisure. In other words, having the knowledge and skills to take responsibility for the meaningful use of leisure time in ways that positively impact self and community. For example, when we work with youth, we try to expose them to a variety of opportunities so they can learn to make positive decisions about using their leisure time in a productive and meaningful way.

#### ***To Educate Others About Leisure***

1. Increase awareness of the many different types of activities and options that are available through programs or at home. Everyone has different interests, and recreation is about choice.

Use marketing materials, offer demonstrations in the community, introduce other activities during programs, and provide education through health clinics and social agencies. Exercises such as [Alphabet Challenge \(pdf5\)](#) and [Leisure Interest Inventory \(pdf6\)](#) can help people think about all the possible activities and identify those that are of interest to them. In Yukon, consider working with groups outside your regular partners. This may help you increase awareness among a section of the population who may not normally participate.

2. Help people become more aware of what they need/want to get out of their leisure participation in order to encourage choices that fit their needs and values.

Facilitate individual and community conversations about values and needs, use checklists such as the “It’s Important to Me” checklist, registration forms, during class online, etc. Reach out to people who you rarely see by spending an extra 30 minutes at the entrance to the grocery store or having tea with a women’s sewing group.



## IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME...

**Directions:** Read the list below and check off the items that are most important to you. Although these may be things that are general to your life, they can help guide your leisure planning.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> to do something meaningful               | <input type="checkbox"/> to feel committed to something      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be confident                          | <input type="checkbox"/> to compete with myself or do better |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to contribute to my community            | <input type="checkbox"/> to develop more skills              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to feel at peace                         | <input type="checkbox"/> to use and improve my skills        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to continue learning                     | <input type="checkbox"/> to be close to nature               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be physically active                  | <input type="checkbox"/> to keep busy                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be creative/express                   | <input type="checkbox"/> to get recognition                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to relax and take it easy                | <input type="checkbox"/> to be a success at what I do        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to do something different from work      | <input type="checkbox"/> to learn more about myself          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be entertained                        | <input type="checkbox"/> to develop friendships              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be able to do what I want             | <input type="checkbox"/> to meet a variety of people         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be spontaneous                        | <input type="checkbox"/> to help others                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be challenged                         | <input type="checkbox"/> to laugh and enjoy                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to do things with my family              | <input type="checkbox"/> to be in attractive surroundings    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to do things my own way                  | <input type="checkbox"/> others _____                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to have support from others              | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to have something to show for my efforts | _____  |

*Adapted from: By Opportunity of Leisure: Leisure and Your Lifestyle. (n.d.) Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation*

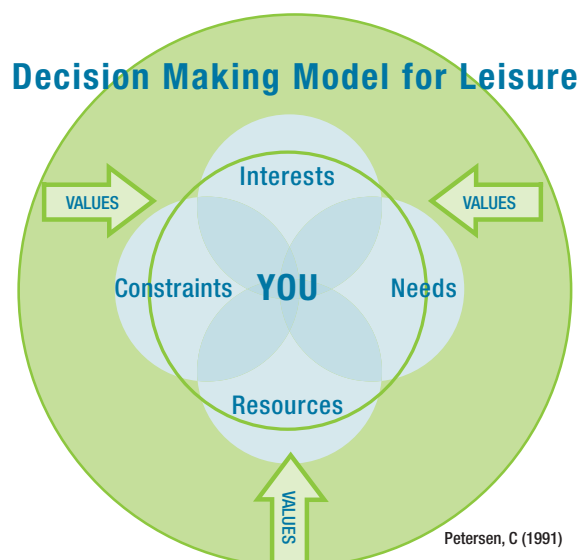
3. Increase awareness of resources that reduce barriers to participation so people understand that their involvement is supported.

Use all types of communication to promote available community resources that would support getting started. For example, the Kids Recreation Fund helps with the cost of participation and the Winter Active for Life Equipment Library provides loans of cross-country ski and snowshoe equipment to community groups. There may be other ways to waive fees, share transportation, set up a buddy system or shared babysitting, or offer “try-it-out” days. It is also important to help people recognize their personal and neighborhood resources.

A neighborhood walking group, an outdoor ice rink, outdoor fitness equipment, and parks and trails all support participation in recreation in a less formal way.

4. Help identify potential barriers to participation and solutions so people feel supported and know how to get past various hurdles and excuses.

Think about what might be a barrier (e.g. often I don't feel like doing anything, too many family obligations, no one to go with, I don't know what is available, etc.) and work the solutions into program planning, marketing descriptions, and any public communications. Help people find solutions to their perceived barriers.



As recreation leaders, we need to help people make choices that are fun and rewarding. Addressing barriers, exploring interests and becoming familiar with local resources can help people feel supported and confident to participate in a variety of leisure activities. Use the Decision Making Model for Leisure to remind you of the factors to consider when helping people in your community make positive leisure choices. And remember, educating others about recreation and leisure is fundamental to the profession of recreation. As such, it is a key responsibility for any recreation leader.

The Northern Supplement; *Everybody Gets To Play™* (pdf7-1) describes barriers that Northern families living in low income situations may experience.

Read about the creative solutions that helped overcome some of those barriers and refer to the summary of success factors for your own programs.