

SPOTLIGHT ON PROFESSOR DAVID HOWARD

In our NACC ICF Newsletters, we occasionally spotlight North Americans who have “made a difference” using ICF. In this issue, we spotlight Dr. David Howard, in recognition for his work applying the ICF in the discipline of Recreation Therapy, both academically and professionally.

David Howard is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Recreation and Sport Management at Indiana State University (ISU). He earned his Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Florida in 2004, and earned previous degrees at the University of Utah in clinical social work (1998) and recreation and leisure studies (1995).

Professionally, David is a member of both the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NTRS) and the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA). These associations represent Recreation Therapy professionals who work in both hospital and clinic settings, as well as in specialized facilities like adult day care centers and other community facilities. ATRA has produced a web page entitled “Frequently Asked Questions About Recreational Therapy,” which is useful for learning more about this innovative profession. Visit the ATRA website at: <http://www.atra-tr.org/aboutfaq.htm> to view the set of informative FAQs.

ATRA itself is an important contributor to the ICF community. As we described in the January-February, 2006 edition of this ICF Newsletter, in 2005 ATRA adopted a position “support[ing] the use of ICF language and terminology in recreation therapy practice guidelines” and other attributes of its professional practice, and “acknowledge[d] the significance of the use of the ICF classification and coding system . . . to clarify and enhance practice and research in recreation therapy.” (The text of the position statement can be viewed at this ATRA website: <http://www.atra-tr.org/docs/ATRAICFstatementNewsrelease.pdf> Professor Howard was instrumental in ATRA adopting the position statement. In fact, between 2004 and 2006, he served as the Chair of ATRA’s Public Health – World Health Organization/ICF team.

David also has contributed to the ATRA Public Health – Healthy People 2010 Committee, advocating for Recreation Therapy professionals to become more involved in multidisciplinary health promotion efforts.

The National Therapeutic Recreation Society is a component of the National Recreation and Park Association. NTRS members specialize in providing therapeutic recreation services for persons with disabilities in clinical facilities and in the community. NTRS members include practitioners, administrators, educators, volunteers, students, and consumers. Within NTRS, David worked with committees related to practicing in correctional settings, and among at-risk youngsters.

The ATRA WHO/ICF Team was established in 2002, under the leadership of John Jacobson, CTRS. Members of this Team have worked with colleagues at the American Psychological

Association in the development of the *Procedural Manual and Guide for a Standardized Application of the ICF: A Manual for Health Professionals*. Members of the ATRA WHO/ICF Team also have presented more than a dozen conference sessions since 2002 about the applicability of ICF to Recreational Therapeutic practice. For example, during ATRA's 2003 Mid-Year Professional Issues Forum, John Jacobson presented the didactic session entitled "The World Health Organization's ICF: Its Emerging Role in Clinical Practice." Similarly, in 2006 David Howard participated in at least two ICF-oriented training sessions during ATRA meetings. During the association's March, 2006, Mid-Year Forum, David presented the session entitled "The WHO and the ICF: Advancing RT Practice, Research and Education." Then, during the association's annual meeting in September, David was joined by Dr. Marieke Van Puymbroeck from the Indiana University School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation in delivering a three-hour training entitled "WHO and the ICF: Moving Our Profession Forward."

Over the years David has contributed substantially to the field's journal for practitioners, *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*. For example, in 2004 David and several co-authors contributed an article entitled "Healthy People 2010 and Therapeutic Recreation: Professional Opportunities to Promote Public Health."

In addition to his work with the ICF, as a researcher, currently David serves as the primary investigator in three studies:

- 1) Investigation of the effect of a dance and body movement intervention for women treated for breast cancer (with co-investigator Rhonda Nelson from Temple University);
- 2) Investigation of the impact of a quality-of-life and intimacy-based intervention (Ipsalu Tantra Kriya Yoga) for men treated for prostate cancer; and
- 3) A qualitative study of Reiki (a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing) as a form of "energy medicine," and the subjective experience of those who deliver and receive this healing modality.

At Indiana State University, David also serves as an affiliated faculty member within the University's Center for the Study of Health, Religion, and Spirituality, whose mission is "to promote . . . scholarship regarding the interrelationships between religion, spirituality, values, ethics, meaning making, and physical and emotional health and well-being." Within this Center, David's projects emphasize "disability and ability issues," spirituality and adjustment to living with cancer, and the spiritual life of incarcerated persons.

In his own leisure-time, David enjoys participating in many sports and recreation activities, including cultural events and festivals, traveling, cooking, pencil and charcoal drawing, drum circles, racquet sports, disc golf, and attending football and basketball games. David recently gave acting a try, appearing in a community-based production of an "Underground Railroad" re-enactment where he played the role of a "conductor," helping runaway American slaves escape to freedom in Canada in the 19th century. All this activity captures David's perspectives on ensuring balance in our lives. David passed along to us a salient quote that we can all appreciate, from Joseph Lee (1862-1937), "The Father of the Playground Movement," who wrote, "We do not cease playing because we are old; we grow old because we cease playing."

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