

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

Horticultural Therapy is the use of plants and horticulture in work with special groups of people to help improve the quality of their lives.

Therapy - therapeutic treatment,
an agency of treatment designed or
serving to bring about cognitive,
physical, social and/or
psychological adjustment.

Therapist - one specializing in therapy, especially a person trained in methods of treatment and rehabilitation other than the use of drugs or surgery.

A situation is therapeutic if it is structured to insure a predicted outcome. It may be direct or indirect and the most beneficial results are often indirect.

Horticultural Therapist - Someone who uses the knowledge of plants and gardening, greenhouse and floristry as a tool to develop a relationship with a patient for the dual purpose of adjustment and encouraging the patient to develop a broader interest in his surroundings as a result of increased knowledge of the plant world.

Horticultural therapy is an
adjunctive therapy.

The horticultural therapist is a
member of a team.

Characteristics of a Horticultural Therapist:

1. A person who likes to work with people.
2. A person who has compassion and patience in helping others.
3. A person who has knowledge of the skills and practices of modern horticulture and the ability to transmit this knowledge to others.
4. A person who is resourceful in developing new approaches and innovative projects to involve people in horticultural interests.
5. A person who knows himself/herself and has confidence in what they can do.
6. A person who keeps a professional, warm, but objective attitude toward another person's problems.
7. A person who can work closely with other staff members toward a common goal.

Horticultural therapy is effective because horticulture is a very popular activity with many positive associations

- : takes one's mind off personal problems
- : increases socialization with others
- : reinforces sense of accomplishment
- : develops outside interests
- : allows someone who has been a care receiver to become a care giver
- : increases self esteem

How does a horticultural therapist perform duties?

- : develops knowledge of each client
- : develops program plans intended to involve the client in therapeutic activities
- : implements plans, often with the help of other staff and volunteers
- : evaluates results of planned program

The specific goals and objectives of a program in horticultural therapy may differ distinctly from one institution to another, from one group of persons to another and from one individual to another.

The general goals and objective can be separated into four groups:

- intellectual / cognitive
- social
- physical
- emotional / psychological

Intellectual benefits:

- attainment of new skills
- improved vocabulary and communication skills
- aroused sense of curiosity
- increased powers of observation
- vocational and prevocational training.
- stimulation of sensory perception

Social Benefits:

- interactions within a group
- interactions outside the group

Emotional / Psychological:

- improved confidence and self esteem
- opportunities to relieve aggressive drives
- activities promote interests and enthusiasm for the future
- opportunities to satisfy creative drives

Physical Benefits

- development and improvement of basic motor skills
- fine motor coordination
- increased outdoor activities.

The American Horticultural Therapy Association is the professional organization for horticultural therapists in the U.S.

Many horticultural therapists are registered as professionals through AHTA.

Most persons who use horticultural therapy are not Registered Therapists.

To learn about registration, professional meetings, publications, etc. please visit the AHTA www site:
<http://www.ahta.org/>