



Horticultural Therapy Core Skills & Knowledge

The following list comprises core skills and knowledge that the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association recommends be included in horticultural therapy (HT) and therapeutic horticulture (TH) education programs.

Therapeutic Horticulture (TH) and Horticultural Therapy (HT) - Foundations of Profession

The horticultural therapy professional has awareness of:

- assessment, treatment planning, implementation, and evaluation methods pertinent to therapeutic horticulture (TH) and horticultural therapy (HT)
- CHTA Code of Ethics
- historical foundations and evolution of the horticultural therapy profession in provinces and territories across Canada
- contemporary use of TH and HT in other countries (e.g. United States, United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, and Australia)
- research and evidence base that supports the use of TH, HT, and therapeutic landscape design

Assessment

The horticultural therapy professional possesses the skills to:

- conduct systematic assessment interview processes
- document assessment findings
- review findings and implications for treatment with client, family, and team members
- incorporate assessment findings to complement and design an individualized healthcare plan
- reference assessment instruments from other health care disciplines relevant to the horticultural therapy treatment process
- understand the function of *pertinent* diagnostic tests and measurements

Program and Treatment Planning

The horticultural therapy professional has the ability and skills to:

- select appropriate interventions and activities relevant to stated goals and objectives
- construct treatment plans which:
 - acknowledge culture, heritage, socio-economic background, skills and abilities of individuals in her/his client group(s)
 - adhere to ethical and professional standards of practice

- incorporate safety and risk management procedures
- accommodate individual strengths, skills and preferences of the client group
- prepare and/or comply with a stated budget as pertinent to the facility, client population, and seasonal programming
- write functional outcome measures that include goals, objectives, progress notes, and other forms of documentation related to design and delivery of a therapeutic program and therapeutic sessions
- document a therapeutic session and client's response to an intervention
- ensure adequate work time is provided to grow, cultivate, harvest, or forage for plant material and/or purchase supplies to support a TH or HT program

Evaluation of Therapeutic Horticulture and Horticultural Therapy Programs

The horticultural therapy professional shall be familiar with:

- quality assurance models (e.g. Cultivating Quality, Thrive, UK)
- methods for evaluating individual progress
- documentation protocols for program planning and accountability
- use of data to modify interventions
- formulation of treatment recommendations for aftercare
- safety and risk management procedures
- ethical documentation for research purposes
- procedures for scheduling and making decisions with reference to a care team

Conditions that Affect Health and Wellness

The horticultural therapy professional has knowledge of:

- basic concepts, theories and principles related to disabling conditions
- behavioural assessment instruments
- interventions appropriate to the current health and or diagnosis of the individual client
- precautions and individual contraindications for therapeutic horticulture and horticultural therapy services
- complementary and adjunct therapies
- medical vocabulary and acronyms
- standard charting language
- pharmacological implications for an individual placed in a TH or HT program
- gross and fine motor skills in designing appropriate interventions
- basic human anatomy and physiology
- health, safety, security and privacy protocols for clients served
- protocols relating to infectious disease control, basic first aid, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation procedures (CPR)

Group Dynamics and Leadership

The horticultural therapy professional demonstrates competencies in:

- group leadership skills
- group dynamics and process
- use of individual and group treatment interventions

Responsibilities as an employee or independent contractor and as a member of a department or service team

The horticultural therapy professional is aware of:

- differences in wages, benefits, expectations and working conditions for an employee vs. a self-employed contractor
- range of hourly wage rates or professional fees for those working in TH or HT in a specific geographic region and differences that apply with respect to types of qualification (e.g. HTT or HTR)
- appropriate designations and coverage for provincial worker's compensation plans and professional and general liability insurance
- safety and risk management procedures subscribed to by employers (including, but not limited to: infectious disease control, fire safety, WHMIS, criminal record check)
- strategies to promote HT and to advocate for HT principles and practice
- opportunities to promote TH and HT programs at a specific agency or site and to use social media and other tools in an ethical manner
- privacy and confidentiality protocols for work with clients, including requirements to use waivers for photographs and other forms of media
- responsibilities with respect to training and/or managing volunteers
- financial management as pertinent to the facility and for the client population being served by TH or HT programs
- methods to seek out and successfully acquire funding for TH or HT program
- relationship to management and responsibilities as member of a department or team
- professional development opportunities in TH and HT and related areas

Horticulture and therapeutic landscape design

The horticultural therapy professional has knowledge of:

- basic concepts, theories, and principles related to horticulture
- physiological, psychological, and sociological effects of plants on people
- reference texts and research-based internet resources that provide information about plant toxicity and allergic effects of plants
- adaptations to horticultural equipment and resources pertaining to the client served
- safe, sustainable, and accessible horticulture practices
- a variety of horticulture related subjects such as:
 - plant propagation
 - organic gardening (e.g. composting, polyculture)
 - integrated pest management
 - floriculture
 - taxonomy
 - botany
 - accessible and therapeutic landscape design
 - botanical arts and crafts
 - greenhouse or nursery production *techniques*
 - soil science
 - entomology
 - plant pathology/physiology
 - harvesting/cooking/nutrition
 - interior plantscaping
 - *local habitat and small wildlife common to local landscapes*