

# ***Living Games Conference 2016***

**Role-Playing Games (RPG) as Intervention Modalities to Achieve  
Therapeutic & Educational Goals for Individuals and Groups  
from the Therapeutic Recreation / Recreation Therapy  
Perspective.**



# ***Miss Being There!***

I really wish I could have come there to meet everyone in person!

- Thank you so much for allowing me to still connect with the community remotely!
- The RPG Research Project is a community portal, everyone is welcomed to join and participate.
- <http://www.rpgresearch.com>



# ***Session Description***

**Due to time constraints, this video is much more declarative than the longer 2 hour presentation which provides more explanation and research details supporting the statements made herein. Essay, slides, & videos related to this presentation at **The RPG Research Project website:** <http://www.rpgresearch.com/lg-tsu>**

# ***Session Description***

**This presentation parallels the paper submitted to the TSU group, with the same title.**

- **Brief background information**
- **Brief example program plans from Therapeutic Recreation (TR) / Recreation Therapy (RT) perspective, using regular and adapted RPGs in all formats: tabletop (TRPG), LARP, solo books/modules (CYOA), & computer-based (CRPG).**
- **The full 2 hour presentation is available online on the RPG Research Website**



# Diversity of RPGs: Format

ROLE-PLAYING GAMING

LIVE-ACTION (LARP)

COMPUTER-BASED



TABLETOP



Character	Level	Class
Tetrus-Keemus	Lv1	
Teldril	Lv3	Arrows
Leonidas	Lv3	Battlemaster
Drezzy	Lv1	



# ***About the Speaker - “Hawke Robinson”***

## **Pre-TR Background (1979-2003+)**

- **Successful career (retired) as CTO/CIO in Computer Science / Information Technology industries.**
- **Published by the SANS Institute**
- **AS/CS, SANS GCIH, MCSE+I, MCP, CNA, SCSCA**
- **Spokane 2600**
- **Tech Talk With Hawke talk show, KYRS**

# ***About the Speaker - “Hawke Robinson”***

## **TR Related Background (2004+)**

**Washington State Department of Health Registered Recreation Therapist since 2014 #RE60526204.**

**Currently a senior undergraduate student at Eastern Washington University.**

**Interdisciplinary Degree in progress:**

- **Recreation Therapy**
- **Music Therapy**
- **Research Psychology & Neuroscience**

**Plan to sit for NCTRC CTRS, & continue onward to graduate interdisciplinary degree program.**

# ***About the Speaker - “Hawke Robinson”***

## **TR Related Background (2004+)**

Detailed background & CV here:

<http://rpgresearch.com/staff/hawke-robinson>

### **Related Facilities, Organizations & Memberships:**

- Seattle Children's Hospital
- Navos
- PAVE
- Saint Luke's Rehab
- Camp Dart-lo
- Northeast Youth Center
- Eastern Washington Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- WSTRA
- PNWATRA
- ATRA
- Eastern Washington University
- Washington State University.

# ***About the Speaker - “Hawke Robinson”***

## **Contact Information**

- **RPG Research Project Community Website:  
[www.rpgresearch.com](http://www.rpgresearch.com)**
- **RPG Therapeutics LLC Services Website:  
[www.rpgtherapeutics.com](http://www.rpgtherapeutics.com)**
- **More contact information:  
<http://rpgresearch.com/contact>**

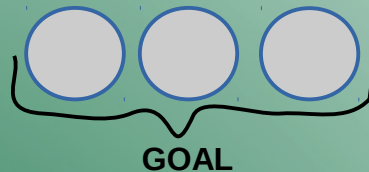


# ***Role-Playing Gaming Background***

- 1979 to current – Role-playing gamer, game master (GM) and independent role-playing game developer.
- 1986 to current – Role-playing gaming conventions organizer.  
[www.tolkienmoot.org](http://www.tolkienmoot.org)
- 2014 to current – President, RPG Therapeutics LLC,  
[www.rpgtherapy.com](http://www.rpgtherapy.com)
- 2007 to current – Founder, Publisher, & co-editor – Other Minds Magazine [www.omzine.org](http://www.omzine.org)
- 2004 to current - Principle Investigator (PI) & Founder - The RPG Research Project [www.rpgr.org](http://www.rpgr.org)

# ***Avedon Interaction Patterns***

## **Intragroup**



Regarding program plans that are more cooperative in nature, Stumbo & Peterson's Therapeutic Recreation Program Design Principles & Procedures (2009) states that it is “**overwhelmingly important**” to provide programs that emphasize the Avedon Intragroup interaction pattern, especially with such an overabundance of solo & competitive programs & such a lack of truly cooperative activities (192).

Most RPGs are designed to readily address this need.

# Avedon Interaction Patterns

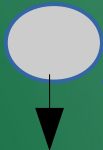
In “The Structural Elements of Games”, E.M. Avedon detailed 8 interaction patterns inherent to all recreational activities.

This section of the presentation correlates these interaction patterns and the differences between the various RPG formats.

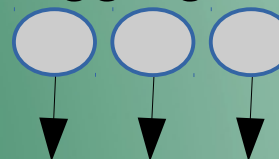
Intra-individual



Extra-Individual



Aggregate



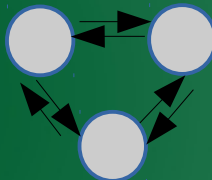
Inter-Individual



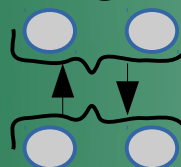
Unilateral



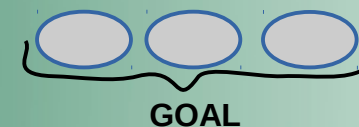
Multilateral



Intergroup



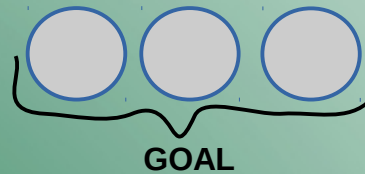
Intragroup



More in-depth version of this presentation explaining all these patterns & varying RPG Formats, provided in detail on the <http://rpgresearch.com> website

# ***Avedon Interaction Patterns***

## **Intragroup**



Cooperative,  
All for one, one for all

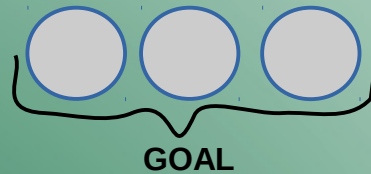
**Action of a cooperative nature by two or more persons intent upon reaching a mutual goal. Action requires positive verbal and nonverbal interaction (Avedon, 1974, p. 169).**

***RPG Application: PBP, TRPG\*, MMORPG, LARP.***

# *Game Theory*

## *TRPGs are Non-zero-sum Games*

**Intragroup**



Game Theory refers to this cooperative role-playing gaming as a nonzero-sum game, (Schick) participants are able to experience overcoming challenges and achieving success *without it being at the cost of fellow players.*

# *Synergy of RPGs & TR (Dattilo)*

Penn State's Professor John Dattilo's book, *Facilitation Techniques in TR* maps very well between TR & RPGs.

Especially the chapters on:

- “Adventure Therapy” (15) for all RPG formats.
- “Expressive Arts as Therapeutic Media” (153) for LARP.
- “Therapeutic Use of Play” (515) for TRPG.

# ***Exploration (Dattilo)***

...his theories match well to further reinforce how RPGs fit so with the concept of literal exploration as the foundation of learning, and how RPGs are so strongly associated with self-determination, autonomy, competence, and social connection to increase the learning effects.



# ***Exploration (Dattilo)***

**Professor Dattilo has asked me to write a full chapter on using RPGs as an intervention modality in the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> edition of his industry-standard textbook, *Facilitation Techniques in Therapeutic Recreation*.**

# ***Controversy & Myths***

## ***Beginning Research***

- Ironically it was the detractors claims, and subsequent successes in banning RPGs (without any research information to validate their claims) that lead to the beginnings of research on role-playing games and gamers.

# ***Video: 1980s Anti-RPG Collage***



Video Collage: 60 Minutes (1985), CBC (1985),  
“Über Goober” (“get a life!” Texas 2004), 700 Club (2012)



# Controversy & Myths

## Banning of D&D / RPGs

**B.A.D.D. Booklet. A list of people they believed committed suicide because of D&D (some listed weren't actually ruled as suicides!).**

### SUICIDES

The below listed victims of suicide have one common denominator: ALL WERE HEAVILY INVOLVED IN DUNGEON AND DRAGONS : ALL DEATHS INVOLVED WEAPONS; SAVE ONE; THREE DIED ON THE FULL MOON: ALL WERE WHITE MALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 12 to 18 , THREE WERE HONOR OR GIFTED STUDENTS.

JAMES D. EGBERT III HOME STATE - MICHIGAN	W/M 16	Died 8/11/1980
MICHAEL P. DEMPSEY HOME STATE - WASHINGTON	W/M 16	Died 5/12/81
IRVING LEE PULLING III HOME STATE - VIRGINIA	W/M 16	Died 6/9/82
HAROLD T. COLLINS OHIO	W/M 18	Died 4/29/83
DANIEL E. ERWIN COLORADO	W/M 16	Died 11/2/84
STEPHEN R. ERWIN COLORADO	W/M 12	Died 11/2/84

THE DEATHS ABOVE DO NOT REFLECT ALL SUICIDES , DEATHS AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDES DUE TO DUNGEON AND DRAGONS

### BANNING

#### D & D

BAILY, COLORADO SCHOOL BOARD  
MORRISVILLE, VERMONT SCHOOL BOARD  
WEST NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY - ST. JOSEPH'S HIGH SCHOOL  
ARLINGTON, WASHINGTON SCHOOL BOARD  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA SCHOOL BOARD  
HERBER CITY, UTAH SCHOOL BOARD  
FRESNO CALIFORNIA  
AKRON, OHIO  
CARDONA PARK, CALIFORNIA  
COSUMNES COLLEGE, CALIFORNIA  
HANOVER, VIRGINIA  
CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA  
SOUGH LEWIS SCHOOL BOARD, TURIN NEW YORK  
ALAMAGORDO, NEW MEXICO  
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN  
MONTLAKE TERRACE, WASHINGTON

This list is not inclusive as the means of gathering information is limited to funds available.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND ADMINISTRATORS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ARE DEEPLY DISTURBED BY THE QUESTIONABLE MERITS AND DANGERS OF THE DUNGEON & DRAGON GAME. MANY ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF DISCONTINUING THE GAME IN THEIR SCHOOLS.

**Also note the sample list of locations officially banning D&D**

# ***RPG Controversies***

You may have already heard some of these statements:

- **Suicidality**
- **Anti-social, violence, & homicide**
- **Meaninglessness**
- **Occult**
- **Lead away from [insert religious system]**
- **Lack of Social Skills**
- **All dorks, nerds, geeks, & losers that can't succeed in real life, and live in the parent's basement.**
- **All gamers are male, & no female RPGers.**

# ***RPG Research***

Depending on criteria,  
between 60 to a few hundred  
studies specifically on  
psychological relationships  
between RPGs  
and gamers (Kim 2008).

# ***RPG Research***

The research shows that role-playing games may have many benefits for participants. Examples include:

- **Examples include helping to more rapidly develop foreign language skills (Phillips 1994).**
- **Developing stronger skills in reading, mathematics, creative thinking, cooperative play, problem-solving, & social skills. (DeRenard 1990).**



# ***RPG Research***

The research shows that role-playing games may have many benefits for participants. Examples include:

- **Improved child behavior & attitudes (Bay-Hinitz 1994)**
- **Catharsis (Hughes 1988).**
- **Development of many other skills as well as potentially significant therapeutic benefits (Kestrel 2005).**

# ***RPG Research***

The research shows that role-playing games may have many benefits for participants. Examples include:

- Suicide rate of TRPG players 1/8th that of non-gamers (all ages) (Blackmon 1994).
- Use of RPG in the self-treatment of clinical depression (John Hughes 1988).
- Lower levels of meaninglessness & alienation (Derenard & Kline 1990), only 17% of TRPG gamers scored high, compared to 46% of non-gaming peers (college students).

# ***RPG Research***

The research shows that role-playing games may have many benefits for participants. Examples include:

Study by Abyeta, Suzanne & Forest, James (1991,

December) indicating that gamers are lower in criminal tendencies than rest of population.

Psychoticism, which was higher in *non-gamers*, did predict criminality.

# ***RPG Format: CYOA***

**Choose Your Own  
Adventure Books  
& Solo RPG books.**

Some offer additional  
complexity & flexibility with  
character sheets, dice, maps,  
etc. such as solo  
RPG variants.



# *CYOA: Pros*

- Accessible to a wide population
- Flexible time commitment
- Well structured
- Reusable
- Inexpensive
- Easy TRS training curve

# *CYOA: Cons*

- Not social (unless modified/adapted to be read aloud by others).
- Rigidly structured, doesn't allow flexibility outside of the if/then design.
- Doesn't really allow for “character” development (except some solo mods).
- Requires matching language ability
- Requires reading skills, or someone to read for them.



# *TRPG: Pros*

- Very social
- Cooperative gameplay (rather than competitiveness of CRPG and LARP).
- Accessible to wide range of populations.





# *Example Starting Tabletop RPG with a new player*

## *Movie: The Gamers 2*



<http://www.watchthegamers.com/>

# ***TRPG: Pros***

- Inexpensive initial investment and long-term re-usability
- Encourages creativity.
- Unlimited flexibility of options.



# ***RPG Format: Tabletop RPG***



Hawke's The Tolkien Moot VII (2011) Annual Convention – Youth RPG Tables  
<http://www.tolkienmoot.org>

# ***TRPG: Pros***

Easy to find players/groups in small cities (or larger).

Easy to find locations to play – table and chairs.

Very little equipment needed, typically just paper, pencil, dice.



# ***RPG Format: Tabletop RPG***



**The 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention – World Con 73 (2015)**



# ***TRPG: Pros***

Can encourage many other interests (history, literature, cartography, painting, sculpting, metallurgy, physics, etc.).

Ancillary activities like miniature painting, terrain building, etc.

# ***RPG Format: Tabletop RPG***



Examples of RPG accessories: Miniatures, battle mats, tiles, building, trees, maps, etc.



# ***TRPG: Cons***

- Not physically active (no current research on obesity rates as there is for computer-based).
- Difficult to find players/groups in small towns
- Ongoing societal stigma, and outright hostility in some locations.
- Requires social, communication, and cooperative problem-solving skills.
- Without strongly skilled GM or TRS supervision, if participants lacking in social skills, can break down and lead to group dissolution
- Steep TRS learning curve to GM is no prior TRPG experience (weeks to months of training experience needed).

# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

***Real-time vs. Turn-based***

**Critical TRS consideration for clients:**

- **Real Time**
- **Turn-based.**

# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

## ***Screen Time***

- Aggregate of research indicating “healthy” video game screen time is around 1-2 hours per day, happier kids (Gosden 2014)
- Increased pre-frontal cortex gray matter and improved memory & navigation abilities (Kelman 2015)
- Neuro-plasticity benefits (McGonigal 2011).



# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

**“Children who play computer or video games for up to an hour daily are the most sociable, happy and least hyperactive, Oxford University study finds.” (Gosden)**

**“Simone Kuhn, a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, has found that the prefrontal cortex actually grows thicker and gray matter more voluminous in people who play games as humble as "Super Mario 64," changes that could improve memory and navigational ability.” (Keilman)**

# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

## ***Exceptional for Social & Emotional Learning***

- Life is Strange (teenage / young adults, especially female).
- That Dragon, Cancer.
- NPR Science Friday April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 episode: “How Games Move Us”.



# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

## ***Escapism***

According to McGonigal, there are two forms of escapism: self-suppression and self-expansion.

- Self-suppression as running away from unpleasant thoughts, perceptions and emotions, “Everything sucks”;
- Self-expansion is actively seeking new skills, stronger relationships and positive experiences “Life is better when I have time to play games.”



# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

- **Personal opinion and experience of CRPG compared to tabletop & LARP.**
- **“Feels like something missing”**
- **Still significant value for the right clients.**

# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

## ***Screen Time***

**Many TRS comment all screens = bad.**

**Some okay with Wii**



# ***RPG Formats: CRPG***

## ***Screen Time***

- While it is good to “unplug”, some types of screen time do help some clients.
- Example: TBI neuroplasticity-related goals
- Example: People with social phobias

# *CRPG: Pros*

- ➊ Readily available in many styles, formats, genres, titles.
- ➋ Very popular and more culturally accepted than TRPG or LARP.
- ➌ More flexible options than CYOA.
- ➍ Online versions can join with existing friends/family, or make new friends online
- ➎ Easy to find others to game with online...
- ➏ Research shows about 1 hour per day very beneficial to key brain development.
- ➐ Many adaptive interfaces available for those with severe disabilities.
- ➑ Can help bed-ridden or socially phobic participants can connect with world when they would otherwise normally be socially isolated, behind the safety of the screen/keyboard/console.
- ➒ Fairly low training curve for TRS, though need experience knowing which are best games to match to client interests and needs.

# ***CRPG: Cons***

- Not physically active, research shows higher levels of obesity.
- Offline versions not social.
- Online versions can have “rough” online communities and poor social experiences.
- Much more controlling structure than TRPG or LARP (less freedom).
- Typically doesn't encourage strong communication skills.
- Companies build in too much “grinding” and “hooking” to make money rather than enjoyment of game, this can feed “Addictive-like” behavior patterns (by design).
- Can be expensive, up-front costs \$60+, monthly 15+, gaming hardware upgrades, etc.
- Online “anonymity” can lead to incendiary behavior and mistreatment of others.



# ***RPG Formats - LARP***





# ***LARP: Pros***

- Physically active (varies).
- Accessible to wide range of populations.
- Team-work.
- Encourages creativity.
- Encourages problem-solving skills.
- TRS training curve, for rules-light and entry-level LARPS, is easy, and typical TR training with ice-breakers and obstacle course role-played scenarios tie in very easily

# ***LARP: Cons***

- Often competitive rather than cooperative.
- The Combat-centered LARPs more athletics-focused, excluding many other player-types.
- Can be somewhat expensive for equipment/costumes, though usually less expensive than CRPG.
- Hard to find groups in area.
- Location accommodations can be challenging and/or limited by weather if outdoors
- Possibly higher “Bleed” potential
- Ongoing social stigma, and downright hostility in many locations (more than all the other forms of RPG).

# ***RPG Program Plan Examples***

- **LARP for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Toddlers.**
- **Tabletop RPG & LARP for ASD youth & adults to learn use of public transit system.**
- **Tabletop RPG for ASD, use of civic resources.**
- **Tabletop RPG for Deaf Community.**
- **At-risk youth, & substance abuse recovery**
- **All 4 RPG Formats for Brain Injury recovery.**

# ***ASD & RPGs***

## ***General Observation Notes***

**My general observations of ASD/PDD populations when participating in well-run TRPG & LARP generally leads to reduction of stereotyped behaviors such as:**

- Fixation**
- Distraction**
- Hand-flapping**
- Isolation**
- Lack of response/interaction to/with others**



# ***ASD & RPGs***

## ***General Observation Notes***

And improvements in:

- **Social interaction**
- **Cooperative play**
- **Communication**
- **Affect**
- **Self-confidence**
- **While competitive game “losses” reduce their confidence.**

# ***ASD & RPGs***

## ***General Observation Notes***

The key is:

- **Structure**
- **Balance**
- **Guidance**

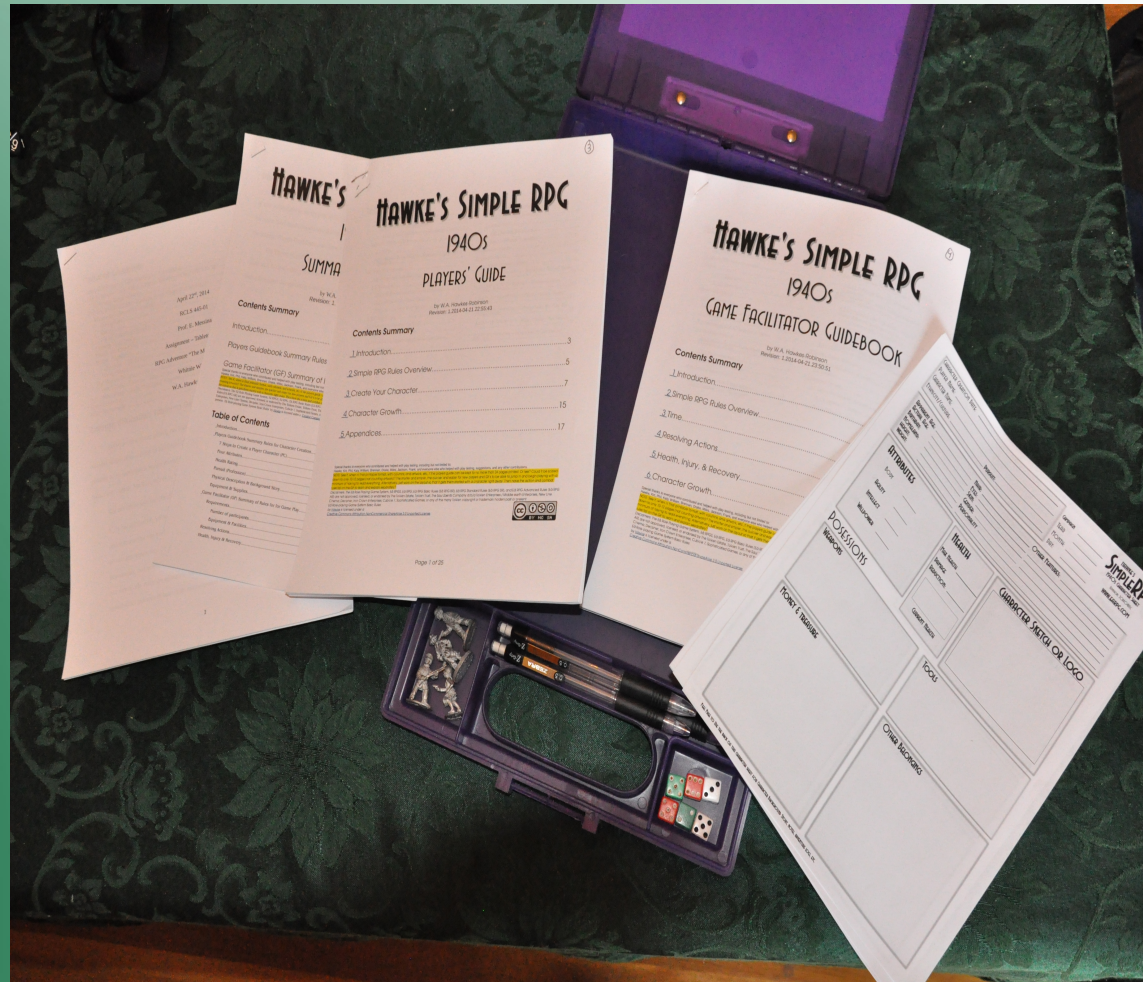
**Little-to-no modifications necessary to either LARP or TRPG for this population to benefit.**

**CRPG & CYOA need more supervision to limit hyper-focus.**

# *The Case of the Missing Surgeon*

*The Game Adventure: Famous Heart Surgeon is Missing!*

*The local doctor has gone missing!  
The famous heart surgeon, Dr. David Stevens has been reported missing by his wife Martha. The Stevens have two children Danny (Age 10) and Kathrine (Age 8). Bewildered and distraught, the family needs your help in order to find their husband and father.*



<http://www.rpgresearch.com/asd-list>

# (Tabletop) RPG Example

## Example Player Character Sheet

### Hawke's SimpleRPG 1940s Noir Setting "The Case of the Missing Surgeon"

From TR Program Plan:  
Using Tabletop Activities to  
Teach ASD / PDD Population  
in the use Of Civic /  
Community Resources.

<http://www.rpgresearch.com/asd-list>

CHARACTER CREATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PLAYER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
CHARACTER NAME: Rosalinda Jones  
ETHNICITY/CULTURE: Caucasian / USA PURSUIT: Investigative Reporter

CAMPAIGN: \_\_\_\_\_  
YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_  
MONTH: \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY: \_\_\_\_\_

ITAWIKE'S  
SIMPLERPG  
1940S CHARACTER SHEET  
ISSUE 20140406  
WWW.EARPG.COM

APPARENT AGE: 25 HAIR: Black OTHER FEATURES: \_\_\_\_\_  
ACTUAL AGE: 30 EYES: Green \_\_\_\_\_  
BIRTHDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ SKIN: Pale \_\_\_\_\_  
HOMELAND: Chicago, IL, US GENDER: Female \_\_\_\_\_  
HEIGHT: 5'5" PERSONALITY Determined, Humorous, Insightful, Tough-minded.  
WEIGHT: 140

#### ATTRIBUTES

BODY 3  
AGILITY 6  
INTELLECT 5  
WILLPOWER 9

#### HEALTH

MAX HEALTH 12  
DAMAGE  
REDUCTION: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
CURRENT HEALTH

#### CHARACTER SKETCH OR LOGO



#### POSSESSIONS

##### WEAPONS

Pistol - .38 Special (6 round revolver)

##### TOOLS

Typewriter  
35 mm SLR camera with 2 rolls B&W film

##### MONEY & TREASURE

Handbag:  
Wallet with \$42.37 USD  
Personal effects (makeup, compact, etc.)  
Pack of gum  
Extra ammunition (1 small box = 24 bullets)

##### OTHER BELONGINGS

Small notebook  
Pencil  
  
Clothing  
Overcoat  
  
Broadbrim hat  
Gloves



# *Adapted LARP*

*Population: ASD / PDD Youth & Adults*

**Tabletop &  
LARP RPG  
Program Plan  
for ASD Youth  
& Adults.**

**Tacoma PAVE**

**OPERATION:  
Z-DAY**

**TACOMA**

A TABLETOP AND LIVE-ACTION ROLE-PLAYING GAMING SCENARIO  
Intervention Goal: Develop proficiency with Tacoma Transit System  
Target Population: Autism Spectrum Youths & Adults

[www.rpgresearch.com](http://www.rpgresearch.com)

**Targeted Skills: Public Transit & Social Skills**



# Tacoma, July 2013 Annual “Zombie Walk”

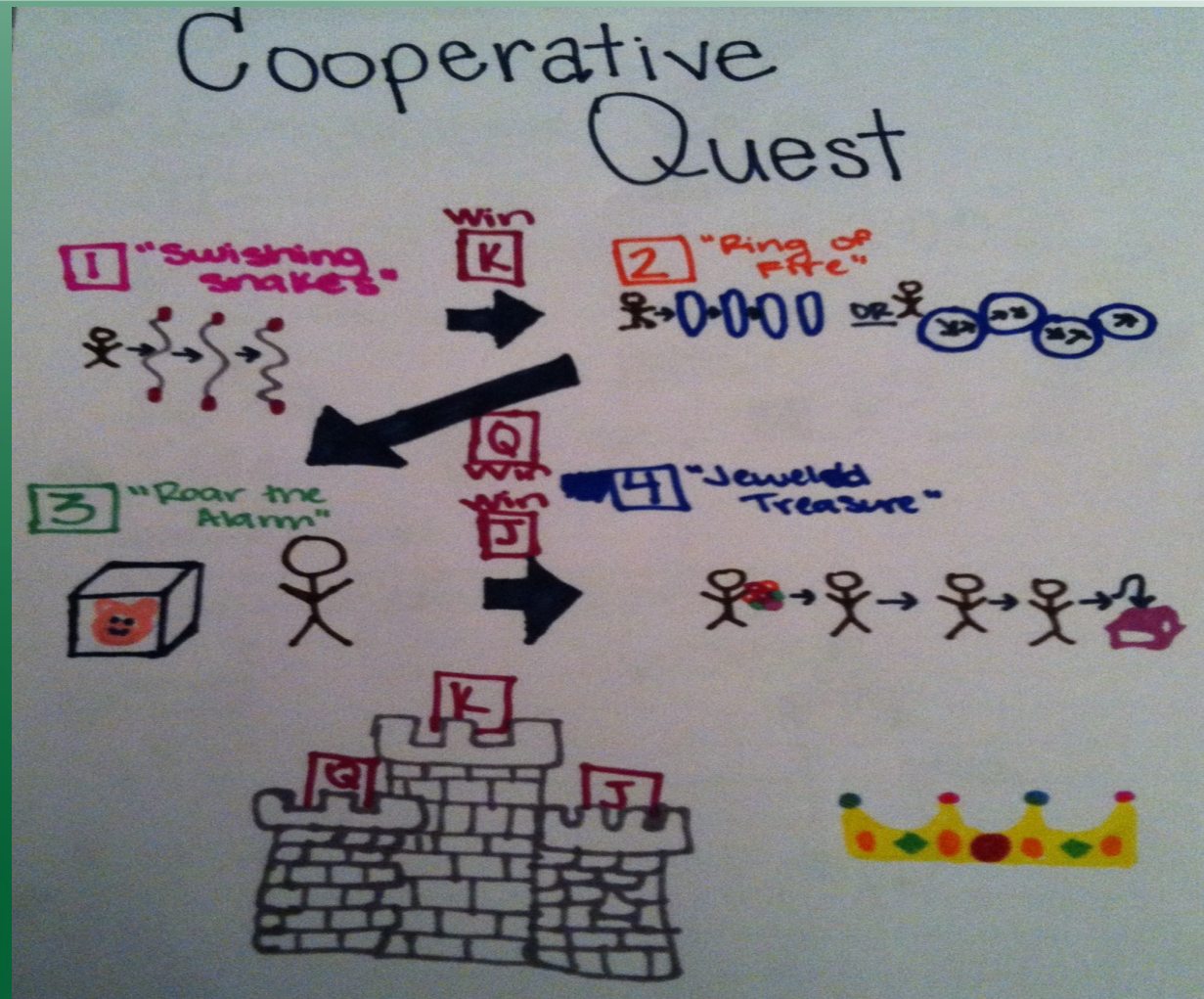


<http://postdefiance.com/crypticon-zombie-tag-heads-for-tacoma/>



# *Adapted LARP*

## *Population: ASD / PDD Toddlers*



# ***ASD Toddler LARP***

## ***Trial Observation Notes***

- **Cooperative Quest**
- **Save the Royal Family**
- **Multiple stages**
- **Token-based reward economy options**
- **Reduction of stereotyped behavior**
- **Enhanced focus and cooperation**
- **Completion of program**
- **Comparison to parallel programs at same time with same group**



# *Adapted LARP*

## *Population: ASD / PDD Toddlers*





# ***Adapted LARP***

## ***Population: ASD / PDD Toddlers***



# *Adapted Tabletop RPG*

## *Population: Deaf*



[www.spokaneasl.com/asl-romans-video/view](http://www.spokaneasl.com/asl-romans-video/view)



# ***Adapted Tabletop RPG***

## ***Population: Deaf***

Population: Deaf and hard of hearing, or anyone who can sign in ASL (or any signing language) with sufficient proficiency. Ages can range in groups from 8 to 13, 14 to 21, and 21 on up. Both male and female can equally participate.

Setting: Safe, quiet, comfortable, non-distracting room, or outdoor setting. Seating reasonably close enough and sufficient lighting for everyone to see each others' signing. Seating usually best in the shape of a circle or a square rather than a rectangle so signing can be seen by all fairly equally (compared to long rectangle making it a bit more difficult to see everyone).

More information: <http://www.rpgresearch.com/deaf-rpg-1>



# ***At-risk & Troubled Youth***

## **Substance Abuse Recovery & Transition Plan.**

- **Using RPG, provide other forms of diversionary activities**
- **For higher stimulus threshold participants, more active LARP**
- **Transition plan to gaming groups**
- **Separate from drug culture peer group**

**Pilot program discussions & development with TR staff at Navos Mental Health in Seattle, WA.**

# ***Social Phobias***

**1 year informal research, 12 new groups**

- **2 Participants with social phobias**
- **Began with MMORPG (online multiplayer)**
- **Transition to my “safe” TRPG groups**
- **Over 1 year period, significant reduction in social phobia**
- **Now they participate in many TRPG groups throughout the area through meetup.com**

# ***Example Program: RPG for Brain Injury***

All 4 Formats of RPG for Brain Injury Recovery Program. Based on amalgamation of actual cases from multiple facilities. Detailed video presentation (24:22) & supporting documents here:  
<http://www.rpgresearch.com/brain-injury>



**These injuries & symptoms are based on amalgamation of actual cases.**

# ***Example Program: RPG for Brain Injury***

The chosen recreational therapy activity for the client to achieve maximal benefit toward recovery will involve four forms of role-playing game (RPG) approaches as the client progresses through 4 stages of the recovery process:

- Stage 1 - “Choose Your Own Adventure” (CYOA)
- Stage 2 - Computer-based (CRPG)
- Stage 3 - Tabletop RPG
- Stage 4 - Live-action (LARP)



# ***RPG for TBI***

## ***Recovery Stage 1***

### ***Client Function Overview / Assessment***

- **Diffuse brain injury, & localized concussive & piercing injuries to specific parts of the brain & spinal cord.**
- **Coming out of induced coma.**
- **Rancho Los Amigo Stage II, with minimal interactive capacity.**
- **Stamina limited to around 15-30 minutes between extended hours of rest.**

***RPG for TBI***  
***Recovery Stage 1***  
***Client Function Overview / Assessment***

**Leisure Interests Assessment (family)**  
**indicates either pre-existing RPG interests,**  
**or interests in TV, movies, or**  
**books from various genres that would**  
**map well to RPGs**

# ***RPG for TBI***

## ***Recovery Stage 1***

### ***Client Function Overview / Evaluation***

As the client continues to recover, there should be measurable improvements in the following areas:

- **Basic cognition**
- **Social interaction**
- **Simple to moderate problem solving**
- **Speech comprehension**
- **Encourages brain plasticity**
- **Relevant codes.**

Ongoing evaluation of program efficacy from the followup assessment results will help determine what modifications should be made to the existing stage 1 program plan, and evaluating when to transition the client to stage 2.

# ***RPG for TBI***

## ***Recovery Stage 2: CRPG***

### ***Client Function Overview / Planning***

**Recommend using mouse, Wii-mote, or adaptive interface to participate in an offline, *turn-based*, CRPG. Should aide in neuroplasticity-related improvements in general cognition, problem solving, audio &/or visual language comprehension, gross motor functions, limited fine motor functions.**



# ***RPG for TBI***

## ***Recovery Stage 2: Computer-based Client Function Overview / Implementation***

**If insufficient motor skills function:  
Bio/Neuro-feedback interface for turn-  
based, computer-based, role-playing game**



**For clients with sufficiently functioning  
motor skills development, use mouse,  
adaptive mouse, or Wii-mote.**



# *RPG for TBI*

## *Recovery Stage 2: Computer-based Client Function Overview / Implementation*

### **Adaptive Game Interfaces: Quadriplegic**





# *RPG for TBI*

## *Recovery Stage 2: Computer-based Client Function Overview / Implementation*

### **Adapted Game Interfaces: Oversize Controllers**



# *RPG for TBI*

## *Recovery Stage 3: Tabletop RPG*

### *Client Function Overview / Plan*

- The client is able to pick up and roll dice
- The client can comprehend letters, rulebooks, dialog, and mildly complex scenario puzzles.
- Only minor modifications are necessary for client to participate in this form of RPG.
- The tabletop interaction with other players and the Game Master (GM) will need to operate at a slower pace than “normal”, but client will be able to participate with the complete tabletop experience.



***RPG for TBI***  
***Recovery Stage 4: LARP***  
***Client Function Overview / Assess***

Client is strongly averse to “regular” workout regimen or physical therapy, but curious about LARP with wheelchair or with braces.

# ***RPG for TBI***

## ***Recovery Stage 4: LARP***

### ***Client Function Implementation***

- Client initially participates in controlled clinical setting with other “LARPers”.
- With Transition Plan, over time client may be able to participate in LARP activities outside of clinical setting.





Steam Punk Professor Xavier's Wheelchair  
By: Daniel Valdez  
<http://www.smeeon.com/>





# *RPG for TBI*

## *Recovery Stage 4: LARP*

### *Client Function Overview / Implement*



From movie: "Knights of Badassdom" (2013)



# ***RPG for TBI Summary***

Through the use of role-playing games modified to fit the client's diverse needs, the client was able to receive a broad range of benefits from a favored recreational activity that provided improvements to:

# ***RPG for TBI Summary***

- Cognition
- Speech
- Social Interaction
- Mathematics and general problem solving
- Fine motor skills
- Gross motor skills and balance.

# ***RPG for TBI Summary***

Because these activities match the client's leisure interests well, combining the variety of options available with the adaptations from the TRS, the client is much more likely to continue engaging in the activities after discharge, continuing to improve the prognosis for the long term recovery outcome.



# The Wheelchair *Friendly* RPG Trailer

A solution to the many issues regarding facilities for RPGs for people with disabilities



<http://www.rpgtrailer.com>

# *Summary*

- Strong *correlative* research disproving negative stereotypes.
- Many indicators of advantages over non-gamers.
- Regular & adapted RPGs useful for TRS & other care providers

# ***Summary***

- Affordable
- Useful for wide range of populations
- Very flexible for adaptation to specific client needs.
- Intrinsic interest (match genre, system, & format)
- Ongoing participation after discharge
- Need more and stronger *causal* research

# ***Summary***

- **[www.rpgresearch.com](http://www.rpgresearch.com)**
- **Email: [rpgresearcher@gmail.com](mailto:rpgresearcher@gmail.com)**



**Happy Gaming!**

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