

Health promotion interventions in adolescents with physical disabilities- Phase 2

Project Summary

Centre for Leadership in Participation and Inclusion

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Holland Bloorview

Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Bloorview
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



SHARING OUR WORK

- Webinar for Therapeutic Recreation professionals across Ontario Association of Children's Rehabilitation Services (OACRS) members April 2017
- Planned university/college presentations- for students to extend knowledge of and considerations for individuals with physical disabilities in health and wellness service delivery through presentation of project and protocol September 2017

WHAT WAS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

Adolescence is a time of growth and development, but youth often develop poor eating habits and become less active during this time. Programs aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles in adolescents ('health promotion programs') exist but often exclude individuals with disabilities. Our research team wanted to find out how to develop a health promotion program specifically for adolescents with disabilities.

In our [first phase of the study \(2015-2016\)](#), we collected information from studies that had already been conducted and asked professionals across Canada about health promotion initiatives for adolescents with disabilities. In Phase 2 (2016-2017) we used this information to engage youth and parents, collecting further information to guide the development of a health promotion protocol.

WHAT DID WE DO?

We conducted two separate semi-structured, focus groups with adolescents with disabilities within a workshop format at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and the YMCA Kingston. This allowed the youth to share past and current experiences, successes, and barriers to participation in health promotion activities. This approach also allowed participants to take part in and reflect upon a range of interventions (e.g., group activities, environments, learning strategies, etc.) based on the key findings identified in [Phase 1 of this study](#).

Parents of workshop participants were invited to complete a survey to share their perspective on their son/daughter's participation in health promotion activities and ideas for future program development.

IMPACT FOR CLIENTS, FAMILIES AND CLINICAL PRACTICE

The design of a 10-week community-based program for high school students with disabilities based on the input of youth, families, clinicians and researchers.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

From the youth perspective we learned:

Desired areas of focus for health promotion programs:

- Emotional wellness (mood, coping with stress, feeling supported)
- Improving physical fitness and/or muscle strength
- Knowing what physical activity options there are
- Maintaining healthy body weight
- Socializing and making friends

Factors that influence engagement in health promotion activity:

- Affordability
- Timing
- Facility Access/Comfort
- Age appropriate
- Equipment
- Awareness
- Activity-specific knowledge and skills
- Family & peer support

From the parent perspective we learned:

Factors to consider when developing health promotion programs for adolescents with disabilities:

- Inclusivity through support of individual needs
- Engaging activities to inspire and motivate
- Opportunities for success and confidence building

NEXT STEPS:

- Implementing pilot program in Toronto, Ontario (Oct-Dec 2017)
- Post pilot program evaluation (Jan-Mar 2018)
- Support community organizations and children's treatment centre's in adoption of program in regions across Ontario (2018)

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS STUDY, PLEASE CONTACT:

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WHO ARE WE?

This project team included a therapeutic recreation specialist, youth facilitator, youth leader, family leader at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, a scientist from the Bloorview Research Institute and the coordinator of the Y Abilities programs at the YMCA Kingston.

THANK YOU!

We would like to acknowledge and thank all of the youth from Holland Bloorview and YMCA Kingston who participated in our program design workshops as well as the parents that participated in our parent survey.

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