



Indigenous and Rural Understandings of “Inclusion” for Organizational and Community Physical Activity Promotion: Narratives from Health Promotion Practitioners and Social Workers in Rural Alberta

N. Ernest Khalema, University Of Calgary; Christina Loitz, University of Alberta; and Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere, University of Alberta.

Qualitative Health Research-International Institute for Qualitative Methodology
(October 06, 2009; Vancouver, Canada)



Poster Objectives

- ✓ The analysis presented in this poster highlights the perceptions of what “inclusion” means in the context of physical activity (PA) promotion by a qualitative sample of social workers in northern an Alberta.

Background

□The data discussed in this poster were part of a 2008 multi-sector knowledge mobilization health promotion project commissioned by the Alberta Centre for Active Living (ACAL) entitled: *Physical Activity for All: Understanding Inclusion.*

□ The purpose of this study was to understand practitioners views of the barriers and facilitators to physical activity participation among those who are considered to have greater difficulty being physical active. The study focused on:

- ✓ understanding how practitioners understand barriers to physical activity in their communities,
- ✓ providing examples of inclusive programs, best practices and policies to promote physical activity for all, and
- ✓ increasing community awareness about practices that may “excludes” people from PA related activities.

Methodology

□A qualitative sample of thirty two (N=32) social workers living and working in remote rural communities in northern Alberta informed the study.

□A focus group with these practitioners was conducted to understand their perceptions of barriers and facilitators to PA in their communities.

□The participants were also asked to share their understanding of inclusive strategies for engaging members of their communities in PA.

References

Sallis, J.F., & Owen, N. (2002). Ecological models of health behaviour. p. 462-484. In K.Glanz, B.K.Rimer, & F.M. Lewis (Eds.), *Health Behaviour and Health Education: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 3rd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

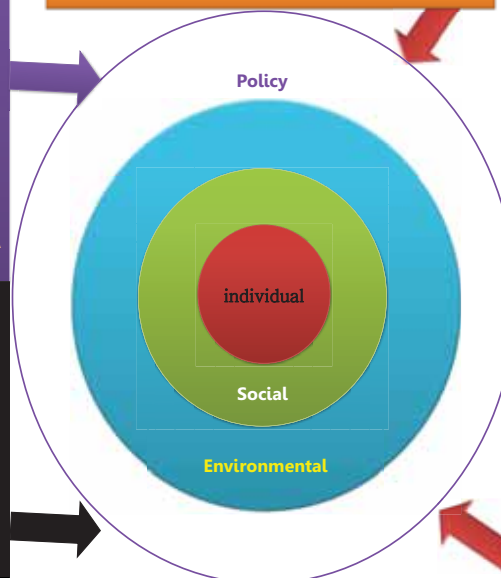
Sallis J, Bauman A, & Pratt M. (1998). Environmental and policy interventions to promote physical activity. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 15, 379-397.

Starfield B. (2001). Basic concepts in population health and health care. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 2001; 55: 452-454.

Socio-Ecological Framework of Physical Activity Promotion

The study aimed at understanding how the concept of inclusion is articulated at the programming, policy, and practice level in health promoting organizations (HPOs). Literature reviews of the ecological model for physical activity promotion ((Sallis *et al.*, 1998; and Sallis & Owen, 2002) emphasize the need for a broad perspective that not only includes individual factors, but also contextual factors (cultural, economic social and environmental) of PA activity promotion.

Ecological Model of Four Domains of Active Living



Understanding the Epidemiology of Physical Inactivity

- **Indigenous Ways of Knowing:** Although social workers promotion practitioners acknowledge the importance of individual characteristics (i.e. intrinsic motivation), they caution that HPOs tend to overlook socio-cultural and environmental determinants of physical activity promotion at both the organizational and community levels.

Attitudes to personal health and inclusion

- Connections to family, ancestors, the wider community and the land are very important to the choices one make about all aspects of one’s life.

Importance of community relationships (PA as relational)

- Spending time with family and loved ones is very important.
- Exercising alone for personal benefit may prevent a person from spending time with family and loved ones, and this may be seen as shameful.
- Tackles all aspects of health(physical, emotional, spiritual, and social)- Medicine wheel

Barrier & Facilitators to PA: Dimensions of Exclusion

- ✓ Indigenous people experience social exclusion/discrimination at double the rate of non Indigenous people which affects participation and development within PA related activities.
- ✓ Recreation facilities and health care services are less available to people living in remote areas and access to health information is often limited.
- ✓ People on low incomes may not choose to spend their limited funds on health, exercise or exercise equipment.
- ✓ For people living in remote areas, access to transport is limited and it may be difficult to attend sporting events or exercise activities.
- ✓ Physical education programs in schools typically fail to accommodate Indigenous students by ignoring their cultural practices. Traditional games and dances are rarely included in physical education programs at schools.

Summary & Conclusion

- The analysis of the data suggest that in order for inclusion to be institutionalized within HPOs, existing physical activity promotion models must emphasize a more comprehensive approach that acknowledges the significance of broader contextual determinants of physical activity related activities such socioeconomic status (SES), racialization processes, locality, and the political/policy climate.
- The effectiveness of physical activity promotion programs targeting vulnerable and underserved groups depend on culturally inclusive and contextually sensitive physical activity promotion models.
- A one-size approach to PA promotion will not fit the needs of indigenous communities in rural contexts .
- Given the unique challenges that these communities face, efforts to promote physical activity must consider the ecological dimensions that impacts physical inactivity.



3rd Floor, 11759 Groat Road
Edmonton, Alberta T5M 3K6
Phone: 780-427-6949
Fax: 780-455-2092
Alberta toll-free: 1-800-661-4551
E-mail: active.living@ualberta.ca
Web site: www.centre4activeliving.ca