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

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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 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 physically 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 “exclude” people from PA-related activities.

Methodology
✓ A qualitative sample of thirty-two (N=32) social workers living and working in rural remote 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

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.